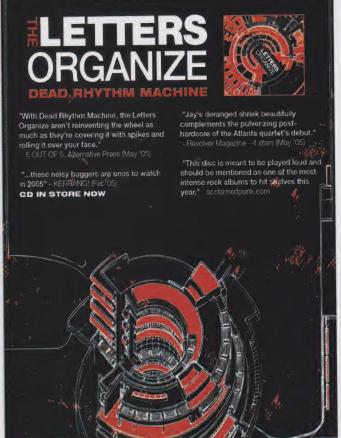


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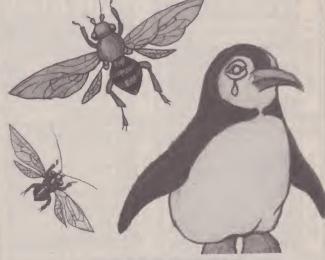
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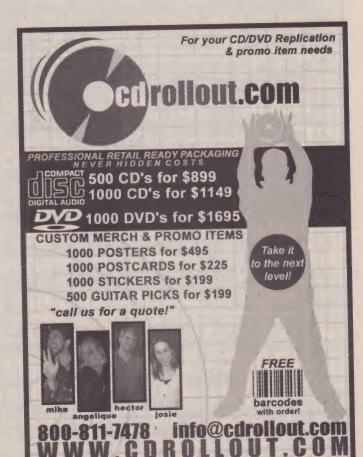
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> Thursday June 16 DJ Sammy - The Allentons

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Saturday June 18 Drain Bramaged - SideKick - More Than Never - Wardrobe Cathedral - Beer Thieves Of America

Sunday June 19 Just Us - Not A chance - Spliff Decision - Me Vs Everybody -Isolated Victims

Monday June 20 Through The Eyes of Heros - Under The Knife - Sinister Mob -Hard Head

The Last Man of the 9th Infantry - Mr Plow - Infinite Infantry

Wednesday June 22 Destruct - 3D Arson - Super dead 54 - Havana Red - Disabled Youth

Thursday June 23
The Pink Swords - The Unheard of - The Ronin King

Friday June 24 VCR - A Delicate Mess - IDM - Bonerott - No Solution

Saturday June 25 Famous Tea - One Big Lie - Useless Intent - The Defense

Sunday June 26 65 Overdrive - Politicians - Red Cavalier - Second Chance -Empty Seat - Soda and his Million Piece band - Gamblers Mark Dexentonados - DMP - Lazer Mountain

> Monday June 27 Nuclear Winter - Kasch

Tuesday June 28 Burke - Unit 21 - The Slow Poisoner - Chaotic Alliance - Frontline Attac

Wednesday June 29 Sonic Syndrome - Generic - Mass Nostalgia - The Bitter Start Motheater

Thursday June 30 The Memphis Murdermen - Mxoxm - The Dizzys - The Livingstons - Grain

Friday July 1
Piss Pops - Ballentine - Nothing Yet - Deciding Tonight

Saturday July 2 Codependants - Poop - The Rogue Set - ANS

Sunday July 3 Private Party

Monday July 4
Seven Word Curse - Pharoohs Slaves - Scrapmetal - Scrapnol

Tuesday July 5

This Evening - Inner Beauty Contest - The last man of the 9

Michigan infantry - Tragedy Andy - One Way Letter

Wednesday July 6 Quarterhorse - Shiver - Potato Bug Love - Kill The Forensics -Casketeers

Thursday July 7
The Pillz - Rocking Scoundrels - Blockage

Friday July 8 Fleshgodz - SMF - Butt TRumpett - Above Richter - Burn On Dakato

Saturday July 9 Lisafire - Sugarpuss - The Devil Bats

Sunday July 10 Line up your lies - Evil Heroes - So Unloved - Womb Raiders Cleveland Steamers - EL Van Gohs - Death In Progress

Monday July 11 Boracho - Severed Artery - Medicine Bag - Benign

Tuesday July 12 Downtrodn - Dead End Stiffs - Plastik Lies - BYP - Zero to sixty Never

Wednesday July 13 Brothers From Another - Sugupuss - Battletorn - Guns Fire Meyhem

Thursday July 14
Daggermouth - SO unloved - The Misfortunes - The Quirks - Blockage

Friday July 15 *
The Dwarves - The Shocker - Loaffas



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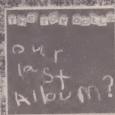
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JUNE 2005





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THE BAND EVERYONE LOVES TO HATE!

Apokaiypse Records recently welcomed sleazy punk rockers Tracy Gang Pussy to their roster. Their debut for the label entitled BLACK will be out in Digipack format late October 2005.

SO THEY SAY...

TENS *

Fearless Records' SoTheySay's selftitled EP will be out June 14. After their June Warped Tour stint, they'll be on the road in July with The Receiving End of Sirens and then with A Change of Pace in August.

VIVA DICTATORS

Get a taste of history with The Dictators on July 12 when the legendary NYC protopunks release VIVA DICTATORS (on Escapi Music). Recorded live at Maxwell's and The Bowery Bailroom, it features 15 classic compositions plus a bonus track recorded at sound check.

TODAY YOUR LOVE TOMORROW

Yesterdays Rising's debut LP LIGHTWORK-ER (Feariess) hits the streets July 12 and

the band will be headlining the Warped Tour's SmartPunk Stage all summer long.

HERE'S TO 10 MORE

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, Hairball8 wiii release 10 CDs in Juneæpsychobiliy from The Koffin Kats, G-String, The Rocketz, and Demon City Wreckers; and ska-punk from Captain Bringdown & the Buzzkillers and Uptown Creepers

GOGOL GYPSY PUNK

NYC Gypsy punks Gogol Bordello Just signed to SideOneDummy. They're label debut, GYPSY PUNKS: UNDERDOG WORLD STRIKE will be out August 23, but in the meantime they'li play Warped Tour beginning July 3 in Ventura.

DANGER MAN

DEXTER DANGER will be embarking on another month-iong national tour beginning June 17 that meets up with their dates on the Kevin Says Stage at the Warped Tour. Their album HELLAFORNIA is due nationwide in July on Orange Peal Records.

SHOCK THE SYSTEM

Make Believe recently completed work on their debut full-length with producer Steve Albini. SHOCK OF BEING is scheduled for a fall release on Fiameshovel. The band will be on tour with mewithoutYou for much of June.

THE NARRATOR TRIUMPH

In celebration of SUCH TRIUMPH, Chicago's The Narrator are pulling up their shorts and prepping their guitars for a full-on Midwest to West Coast assault. The tour's initial leg finds them playing no less than five shows in Texas before heading home to Chicago for

a July 4 shindig at the Empty Bottle. Check www.thenarrator.net for details.

FROM BRAZIL WITH LOVE

June marks Brazil's first headlining Midwest/East Coast tour with 3 and The Reason (as well as a few special guests along the way). The band is also writing their new album with plans to enter the studio later this summer to record the follow-up to A HOSTAGE AND THE MEANING OF LIFE.

GO BETTY GO GO MULTIMEDIA

If you don't want to wait for the release of a new Go Betty Go album, then download "Everywhere" at the iTunes store. It's the theme song for the invisible Woman character in the upcoming Fantastic Four video game and movie coming out this summer.

IS THAT FISH IN YOUR POCKET OR ARE YOU JUST HAPPY TO SEE ME?

A 43-year-old Australian woman was found carrying 51 live tropical fish after custom officials at Melbourne airport heard "flipping" noises coming from beneath her skirt. Officers discovered she'd strapped on an apron of water-filled bags containing the fish. She could face charges for breaking quarantine and customs laws for bringing in the fish without giving a declaration.

АННИНИНИНИН!!!!

Former child star/Michael Jackson bedmate Macaulay Culkin has indeed pleaded guilty to charges of marijuana possession AND possession of a controlled substance without a prescription in a case stemming from last September (after pleading not guilty in October). He's been fined \$400 and will be sentenced in a year.



NOT SO USELESS NEWS

Useless ID's new Website is at www.useless-id.com. Go there to check out some tracks off their upcoming Kung Fu release, REDEMPTION, out July 12.

NOT LOST IN TRANSLATION

Plain White T's have posted the track "Losing Myself", from their Japanese release, on http://myspace.com/plain-whitets. They'll be on Warped Tour from June 16-July 4 and then heading out with The Academy Is, Days Away, and June.

SPRECHEN SIE SKA?

Heidelberg/Darmstadt-based nine-piece ska band/crooks The Skaliners will be touring Europe in June and then later on throughout the year as well. Their latest album is STEAL THE MUSIC on Black Butcher Records. Find more at http://www.skaliners.de.

OH, IT'S ON!

Worldfolk is set to launch its seventh annual "B.O.B." Battle Of the Bands Festival, which will begin July 4 and continue until September 4 at various venues around the U.S. Shows are planned for Las Vegas, L.A., Hollywood, Agoura Hills, San Diego, Phoenix, Tijuana, San Jose, Sacramento, Portland, Fort Collins, Austin, San Antonio, San Francisco, Spokane, Denver, and Seattle. Registration is now underway. Interested in registering your band (all genres welcomeæwin cash and prizes!), being a venue, sponsor, volunteer, or judge? E-mail roddy_belford@yahoo.com or call 702-353-8178. www.worldfok.com.

DON'T PANIC...

In support of MXPX's latest opus, PANIC (released June 7 on SideOneDummy), they'll be on the Warped Tour all summer long, as well as playing the 2005 KROQ Weenie Roast in Irvine and the Live 105 BFD festival in NoCal.

WARPED RECORD

The Official Warped Tour Compilation for 2005 came out June 7. The soundtrack for the summer is jam-packed with all your favorite bands (NUFAN, Dropkick Murphys, Pennywise...), as well as some great up-and-comers, who are on the bill for this year's event (The Matches, Go Betty Go, Hawthorne Heights).

STRAIGHT EDGE, WHO KNEW?

In Utah and Nevada straight edge is classified as a gang in response to instances of violence in which the lifestyle has been at issue. In fact, Reno police have said that, so far this year, there have been more crimes committed by edgers than street gangs, and believe the violence is being used to "promot[e] their own personal philosophy,"

IN RELATED NEWS...

Freya/Earth Crisis frontman Karl Buechner came to the defense of the straight edge lifestyle on Fox News' AT LARGE WITH GER-ALDO RIVERA on June 5, basically contending that being edge is a positive choice and that the mainstream media only dis-

cusses the topic when something negative happens, falling to cover the issues without bias.

Karl describes straight edge "as a lifetime commitment to abstain from alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and promiscuity. It has changed thousands of lives for the better, steering young people clear of many of society's problems."

LOST PATROL NEWS

With a "new reason to live," The Lost Patrol Band (the solo project of former Refused/(International) Noise Conspiracy vocalist Dennis Lyxzén) will see its selftitled third album released August 23 on Epitaph.

THORP ADDITIONS

Thorp has just scooped up two acts, German psychobilly band Mad Sin and Philly metallic hardcore outfit Fall River, who will be recording in July for a possible November release date. Mad Sin's first North American release, ... SWEET & INNO-CENT?...LOUD & DIRTY!!, will be out August 23.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

TAKE PENICILLIN NOW, the initial compilation from G7 Welcoming Committee, has a track-listing that consists of music from every band that has released a record through the label. Expect songs from the likes of Malefaction, warsawpack, Propagandhi, Clann Zu, and more.

STRONG ISLAND!

Long Island pop-punkers The Goodwill have welcomed new bassist Shawn Setaro (of The Lordz of Brooklyn) to the fold. June and July will see the band on the road. Check www.thegoodwill.com for details.

THIRD TIME A CHARM?

Serial bride Jennifer Lopez has actually made it to the one-year anniversary with hubby Marc Anthony. On June 5, J.LOæahemæmarked the occasion by treating Marc to a \$5000 shopping spree at Lisa Klein Men in Malibu. What'd he buy? A sapphire bracelet, ring, and \$900 backpack, of course.

SO IT'S NOT ALL A MYTH?

Philip A. Cooney, chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality (which helps develop/advance administration policies on environmental issues) who also previously led the oil industry's fight against limits on greenhouse gases, has repeatedly altered government climate reports as to downplay links between these gases and global warming, according to documents obtained by THE NEW YORK TIMES. Cooney deleted/adjusted descriptions of climate research that government scientists and their supervisors (including some senior Bush administration officials) had already approved. Climate experts and environmental groups noted Cooney's changes demonstrated his (and others') connection to energy industries that have opposed greenhouse-gas restrictions.

AFFLICT THE SICK TO WAGE WAR ON ..!

On June 6, the Supreme Court decided federal authorities CAN prosecute people ailing from chronic illness for using medicinal marijuanaæeven in the nine states that have laws allowing medicinal use of the drug.

RUMBLINGS FROM THE DEAD

July 12 marks the release date of the Rumbleseat (featuring members of Hot Water Music, Bitchin', and Blacktop Cadence) posthumous release RUMBLESEAT IS DEAD (on No Idea Records).

SAD TO SEE YOU GO

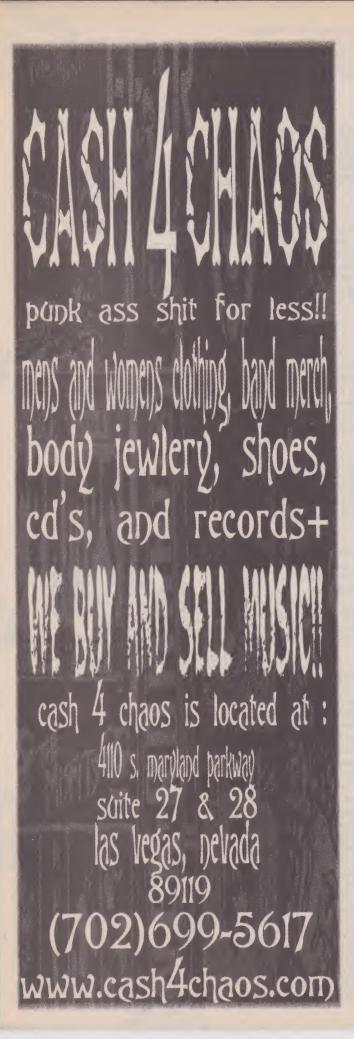
A few break-ups to report: Boston's Kicked in the Head, after nine years and four records, have called it quits; likewise Pitch Black in a mutual decision after six years of playing together and releasing two LPs; and last but not least, Five Knuckle from Bristol, England.

THE NEWS was compiled by Janelle.
Email us in with your handy-dandy news at: skratchnews@hotmail.com. Read Skratchmagazine.com for more news.









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"... I really have no regrets.

If we weren't able to play again, that would be fine. But as long as we can do it, we wanna be doing it"

THE WEIRDOS

Rightly disgusted with the stagnated state of music (and culture, for that matter), a group of exuberant and defiant youth sprouted up in L.A. with a goal to bring some danger and new aspects to the of their ascent (1976-'77), others in New York and London were on the same page. Yet, The Weirdos formulated everything they were doing on their own and are considered the first punk band to emerge from L.A.

(albeit after enduring some "unplanned" hiatus-es) Brothers original singer John and guitarist Dix have since 2002 been joined by drummer Sean Antillon (The Skulls) and bassist Zander Schloss (Circle Jerks) and appear to be an unstoppable force, keeping the spirit of '77 alive amidst all the packaged and sterile corporate nonsense now being served up under the punk banner.

SKRATCH: What caused the [band's] demise in '81?

JOHN: Well, I would say outside interests and internal problems in the band, [including] creative conflicts. I wanted to go in another direction, and we were just worn out. The fun of it had started to wane, and it just became kind of a drag for a while. [...] Then we got it back together. About three years passed before we regrouped. We're talking about the mid '80s, so the picture had changed.

and on?

JOHN: Yeah By then some of the other band members had gotten into other bands, so we were never as focused as a band, I suppose. But I never realjust take hiatuses [Laughs] Unplanned [ones]. We'd just go with the flow, ups and downs, hills and valleys. At certain times it was the right time, and other times we'd lay low. But we're fully engaged

SKRATCH: Are you going to put out a third WEIRD

JOHN: I would say yes, a Volume Three. I'm not sure when. There was a 12-year gap between the first two. [Laughter] Hopefully it'll not be as long. And we're knocking around new tunes, as well. We may very well have a new album before

SKRATCH: You said you're really serious about it again. When would you say that happened?

JOHN: Well, we've been on

since we hooked up with Sean, our drummer my brother Dix. We're slated for England in December. We're gonna play some festivals and tour Britain. We're pretty excited about that. And we're formulating some mini-tours that will get us to that point, as well; and we'll be working our way back to your neck of the woods fair ly soon-I would think in the coming weeks.

SKRATCH: Cool. Yeah, last year remember Brooklyn.
JOHN: You were at the show?

SKRATCH: Yeah.

SKRATCH: I guess you were in NY the year before too, right?

JOHN: Yeah, we were at the Knitting Factory.

ple are still into it.

JOHN: Yeah, great crowds. That's what's really been motivating us. The enthusiasm of the crowds has been

SKRATCH: You have a family?

JOHN: I do indeed. I have a two-year-old son. He was two on St. Patrick's Day. He's just my pride and joy. Yeah, [there's] my wife and my son

SKRATCH: It must be hard then for you to go on tour.

JOHN: Yes, that part is extremely difficult. But we go out for short stints, so I don't have to be away [too long]. Two, three weeks at a time is all I can do right now until he's ready to go on the road. [Laughs] But he's a rocker, too. He can

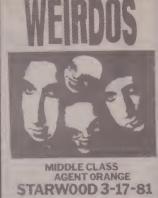
SKRATCH: [Laughs] Really? That's great! He's a fan?

JOHN: He sorta knows what I do; but he's got

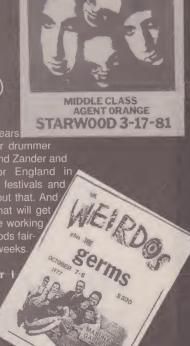
borrowing moves from him. He influences me more than I influence him.

SKRATCH: I never heard it, but you had a record called

JOHN: Yes. That's coming out soon on CD. That's a timely release.







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SKRATCH: Can you just talk about that album a little bit?

JOHN: Well, my mom was outta town, and my brother and I moved into her house out in Santa Monica for a couple of weeks, and it was just a recording session that took on a life of its own. We decided to make it an album after the fact, as track that was sitting in the middle of the living dryer for percussion and drums. No vocals, just per-cussion and racket. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Well, at around the same time, you did "Skateboards to Hell" and "Hey Big Oil"?

"Skateboards to Hell" was about a year before [that]. And that was sort of a precursor to WARHEAD, where my brother and I

SKRATCH: Yeah, 'cause those are definitely a little differ-

JOHN: Yeah, those are just stuff that was on a tape. [Laughter] Actually, "Hey Big Oil" was a little more structured.

SKRATCH: A little more accessible. And then, of course, you put CONDOR [1990] out. So after that, what were you

project has been with another collaborator, Zander Schloss. We have a whole double-album's worth of songs that are a

are really a variety of different stylings. That's another project that I HOPE is terms, that's what I'd been doing in the interim: just living life. I'd been living in making art for my own amusement and just surviving and existing in the here

SKRATCH: So, you're pretty much an all-around artist.

JOHN: Well, I would hope so. Out of necessity. As The Weirdos, we kinda did it all but out of necessity. And then it just became fun to do it all. Doing it all ourselves—meaning the graphics and album covers.

SKRATCH: About how the band has been sporadic all these years: does that disappoint you

at all? Do you ever wish it were more of a constant?

JOHN: There was a time when I was disappointed, but I'm not now. It's what I wanna be doing and what I like [Laughs] Our property...We live up in the mountains. It's a nice chunk of land with trees. I like working on sour grapes, but I've let go of all sorts of nonsense. I really have no regrets. If we weren't able to play again, that would be fine. But as long as we can do it, we wanna be doing it. There's nothing I can do about what's gone before. We're just firmly entrenched in

here and now-which we [Laughs] I have no regrets. I can drudge some up, but I really don't dwell on the past.

JOHN: Yeah, I just don't anymore. I try to use it wanna make it. Anyway, I'm getting a little too

SKRATCH: About the new material: around how many songs would you say

about half-a-dozen new tunes so

SKRATCH: Do you find yourselves more particular or anything, thinking they have to better your classic material or something like that? JOHN: I don't think we'd consciously the musicality and the issues that we sort of tackle be the impetus. But we Does that answer your question?

I actually spoke with Klaus from DKs They've been doing stuff without Jello, of course, and we were talking about if they doing stuff, but he said they really wanna make sure it holds up to the old stuff—he's like, at least to FRANKENCHRIST. You know what I mean?

JOHN: Yeah, I would agree with that. Well, we wanna go beyond just living up to those expectations and surprise people. To me, the element of surprise is critical in all good art. Not that it's even art. That's a little pretentious. [To] the creative process. We don't wanna pander, but we don't wanna let people down. And that holds true with the live end. If we can't deliver on a certain standard, I wouldn't be interested in doing it. I'm just as surprised as anyone else might be keep showing up as long as they say so.

JOHN: Old?!

expectations or living up to them. I'm far less concerned with what people think than ever before, and I think that comes with

saw you guys, and that was just FUN, a really fun time. for coming to the show.

SKRATCH; [Laughs] No problem.

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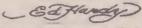






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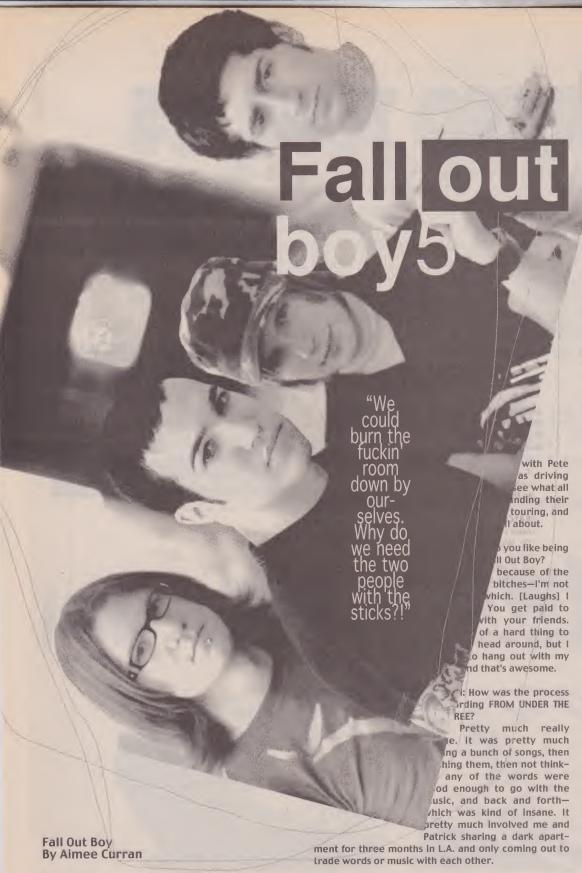


EL STAR



LONSDALE

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Fall Out Boy started in Chicago. The quartet—vocalist/gultarist Patrick Stump, bassist Peter Wentz, drummer Andrew Hurley, and gultarist Joseph Trohman—took their thrashy metal roots and the boom of being emo offspring to create a mix of poppunk meiodles that have backhanded music fans and critics alike. They have managed to work the industry to their advantage, traveling to different countries, securing a bus for the Warped Tour, and successfully releasing their sophomore album, FROM UNDER THE CORK TREE.

SKRATCH: What do you do when you feel like all your songs are crap?

PETE: If a song doesn't make you feel alright or make you fell like so happy that you own the song, then I guess it should be trashed.

SKRATCH: What do you think of all the attention you are getting from MTV? Is this type of attention something you have been working towards, or is it a nice bonus to what has already been a rewarding experience?

PETE: That's the kind of thing about attention: you can't

really pick the kind that you get-which is unfortumate, because you have nild stars, and their ust get wasted and their cars into trees, .h is1 attention [the are getting, too. at's similar to] when I want your songs to be ard by as many people , possible: you have to ake everything else that goes along with it. Everyone likes to see themselves on the screen, but I'm not trying to lick the reflection off the TV. It's flattering and it's really cool, but at the same time there's other things out there that make my world go 'round [...].

SKRATCH: How have you reacted to people calling you sellouts?

PETE: i feel like we haven't really had that backlash. i think it's a legitimate concern of people to want to keep these bands in their back pocket. These bands that they discovered are kind of like gold to them. The best [example] of it is this letter that this guy wrote. He didn't write it to other people, he wrote it to himself 10 years ago when he was calling peopie seilouts. It's just like the different piaces you can be at. To me, selling out is when you do something that you normally wouldn't do just for the money or fame or whatever. There are certain lines that I would never cross. It doesn't matter if there's a million dollars or two dollars on the table if it's something that I am just not interested in doing.

SKRATCH: How is your life different from what you think your fans perceive? PETE: I think that it's probably far more boring than they think it is. At the same time, I think there's far more anxiety and [drama]. I'm kind of a drama queen, and maybe that doesn't come through when I am just meeting people-but that's another side of my personality.

SKRATCH: Why should people care about your music? What makes you stand out?

PETE: The reason I think people should care about our music is because inside my head we write the best songs on the planet Earth. But music is such a wide open thing. Every person in every single band—from Nine Inch Nails to my brother's garage band—thinks that [theirs] are the best songs [...] That's why I hope people care about them. But not everyone is gonna like your music.

SKRATCH: What do you want to be happening with the band a year from now?

PETE: Celebrating the one-year anniversary of that question.

SKRATCH: What's a band you really want to tour and or collaborate with?

PETE: I'd really like to collaborate with Natalie Portman. I don't know—whatever gets her into my bedroom. I'd like to collaborate with someone who nobody would expect. Collaborations are so overrated. It's two people who can't do it on their own just getting together and rubbing sticks together and barely making a fire. We could burn the fuckin' room down by ourselves. Why do we need the two people with the sticks?! [Laughs]

SKRATCH: What's a song you are sick of playing?

PETE: "Where's Your Boy". I want to sell it to Heineken. [Sings] "Where is your beer tonight? I hope it is a Heineken." Wait, could we go back to the sellout question now? [Laughs] That's the song I'm kind of sick of playing, I guess—but that's the song we're most known for. Every band is cursed by that: the song that everyone seems to love is usually the song the band kind of hates.

SKRATCH: What's the significance of the title "FROM UNDER THE CORK TREF"?

PETE: We wanted for people to get their parents to buy it for them [having] to say, "Will you go by me FUCT?" It's just an awesome acronym.

SKRATCH: What are the three most important things to being a musician—especially at the point you're at?

PETE: [Silence]

SKRATCH: Do you want to skip this question and go on to the next? PETE: Yeah, let's go on to the next question.

SKRATCH: Favorite word to describe something?

PETE: I use late-'80s gangster stuff like "dope" and "fresh." My friend uses "totes" (short for "totally"). I'm pretty into that, too.

SKRATCH: Do you think you would ever incorporate those words into your songs?

PETE: [Laughs] Maybe into a song

SKRATCH: Do you want to be famous?

PETE: I saw AxI Rose step off the bus in the "Welcome to the Jungle" video, and I thought it was a hot chick for a second; but a minute later he was singing with the band, and I thought "I wanna be that guy." So, definitely...I guess...probably.

SKRATCH: What do think of the mystery surrounding the artist Jandek? Do you think it's a good way to go about promoting yourself?

PETE: You know what? I don't think I would know about that at all except for Patrick: he schooled me on it completely. I think that it's amazing when one person does something like that, 'cause it's totally like the Bigfoot experience or the Loch Ness Monster, I guess. I don't know. I think that if a lot of people did it, it would be a lot less interesting. But at the same time those people are not on the public radar at all.

SKRATCH: What Fall Out Boy song means the most to you? Why?

PETE: "I've Got a Dark Alley and s Bad Idea That Says You Should Shut Your Mouth". It is the most honest thing there is, and it captures a moment. It would be impossible to play live because it's just too real.

SKRATCH: What's your reasoning behind your lengthy song titles? PETE: We feel like we can't write good enough songs, so we really have to dress them up, kind of. Like, we're the ugly chicks who are kind of really slutty so that dudes still want to hang out with us, anyway.

SKRATCH: Any good road stories?
PETE: I've seen a guy from another band get with a transvestite hooker. I was like, "Wow, that guy's gonna get a hooker. Wow, that's a dude dressed up as a chick."

SKRATCH: What countries have you guys traveled to?
PETE: Canada, Japan, and the U.K.

SKRATCH: And where have you gotten the best...

PETE: [Interrupts] Blow job? That's really a U.S. thing. Just kidding. Oh, wait, sorry: you mean best coke? That's still a U.S. thing, definitely. Naw, I'm just kidding.

SKRATCH: I'm taiking about the best reception.

PETE: I guess the best will always be Chicago. But it was so strange stepping off a plane in Japan [with] people waiting at the airport and hotel. They knew all the words to our songs, but they couldn't speak English. That was kind of cool.

For more news and band-related stuff to feed your head, check out www.falloutboyrock.com.



NORMA JEAN
By Nathan Bright

Christian band Norma Jean recently released their new album O' GOD THE AFTERMATH on Solid State Records. God never sounded so pissed off. Hailing from the dirty South, Norma Jean has come a long way since they days when bearing the name of Luti-Kriss frequently got them confused with rapper Ludacris. This interview is a testament of that

The only way to get a hold of this internationally-touring band was via e-mail. Guitarist Scottie Henry was kind enough to answer a few questions.

SKRATCH: The standard question: Where are you guys at right now, and what are your plans for the day?

SCOTTIE: Right now I'm in Nagoya, Japan, and I'm about to watch a Nirvana DVD I just bought and then go to bed.

SKRATCH: You guys recently put out O' GOD THE AFTERMATH. What is the general response to it by the kids at shows?

SCOTTIE: It seems to be going very well. Half of our set is new songs, and half are from BLESS THE MARTYR, KISS THE CHILD, and the kids have been singing along [as much with the news stuff as with] the older stuff.

SKRATCH: Speaking of the new album, it has received a lot of wonderful reviews and a fair amount of praise, but I have also seen some negative comments about it-specifically, that it did not meet the standard the first album set. How do you guys feel about statements like that? SCOTTIE: It doesn't bother me.

NORMA JEAN

We wrote it for ourselves, put everything we had into it. It was and is our lives, and it is something that we love, so it has met all of our standards which is all that matters.

SKRATCH: You've been out touring and playing the album for a decent amount of time now. Is there anything that you wish you had done differently on it?
SCOTTIE: I can't think of any parts that I would change. Maybe once we start playing more and more songs from it I will think of some; but we went over the songs for so long before we recorded that I am very happy with all of it.

SKRATCH: How would you compare BLESS THE MARTYR, KISS THE CHILD to O' GOD THE AFTERMATH?

SCOTTIE: I would say that the music is way more structured on O' GOD THE AFTERMATH. The actual riffs and music are just as chaotic, but it's not just riff after riff after riff put together. We actually structured the songs pretty basic for the most part, so it is a lot different in that way.

SKRATCH: The song titles on your albums are very interesting.
What was the idea behind them?
SCOTTIE: That was a lot of very sleepless nights from me, Cory, and Daniel. We decided to take two words that described the lyrics or had something to do with the song and then combined them to make one word. It was a pretty long process. We just wanted to do something way different with them. Every song also has a second name, which I guess are more straightforward or "basic" song titles.

SKRATCH: When recording the new album, did you guys have anything specific in mind that you wanted portray or a certain message that you wanted to send out? If so, what was it?

§COTTIE: I think as far as the

recording process of the record goes, we didn't really have anything in mind. We trusted Matt B. and

knew he would make it great. I think the record definitely has a message, but we didn't even realize until after we had recorded it, so it was kind of backwards. I don't know why it took so long to realize [what it was]. All of us were giving input on lyrics—maybe that's why. I think there is a common message, the deception of man, but there's also a great hope that is there.

SKRATCH: You're currently touring in Europe. What is that like in comparison of touring elsewhere (for instance, back in the States)?

SCOTTIE: The shows in Europe have been amazing. They are a little different than [ones] in the States-I think because [in Europe] there isn't as much crap going down at the shows. Everyone is there to have a good time, and that's it. No drama or scene or anything like that.

SKRATCH: You're a Christian band. You are amazingly heavy and play music that is not generally considered to be a "Christian" style of music. How do other Christians and Christian groups respond to this?

SCOTTIE: Um, I haven't really noticed how they respond to it. I mean, friends' bands that are also Christian are down, but they are also usually heavier music. I don't know. Sorry if this is a lame answer.

SKRATCH: On the flip side, how does the general hardcore scene respond to this? I mean, it seems like people would easily dismiss you guys just for your beliefs.

SCOTTIE: I mean, that has definitely happened in the past a few times, but for the most part people are cool about it. I mean, everyone in the "hardcore scene" has a belief in something, and most people respect and understand that everyone has their own beliefs, so it all works out. We're all just having fun and playing music.

SKRATCH: Norma Jean has become a pretty well-known and respected band that other bands would be honored to play with. Do you guys have any bands that you would just love to play with and haven't had the chance yet? SCOTTIE: Meshuggah. Definitely Helmet. We grew up on that band and love them to this day. Coalesce and Botch...but they broke up. Black Sabbath We were actually scheduled to play with them in London at but we cancelled it or something. Lame.



SKRATCH: Norma Jean has come a long way from Luti-Kriss. Is there anything you miss about those days? SCOTTIE: Those days were definitely fun and way different. We were all so young and just out touring all the time, playing with mo merch to 20 kids with three or four days off and

30-hour drives in between shows in the beginning—which gave us plenty of time to do whatever we wanted, usually dealing with fire, bottle rockets, and homemade bombs. It has been fun just staying on the road for like five years straight and seeing the shows progress and seeing the same kids out for

MOST PEOPLE RESPECT AND that many NDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN BELIEFS, SO IT ALL WORKS OUT."



years in a row.

SKRATCH: If could set up a dream show of past and present, what bands would play?

SCOTTIE: Nirvana, AC/DC, At the Drive-In, Tool, pre-black album Metallica, Helmet, Johnny Cash, Dinosaur Jr., Pig Destroyer, Interpol, Megadeth (around the COUNT DOWN TO EXTINCTION time), Beck, Crowbar, Misfits (with Danzig), Frodus, Primus, Sigur Ros, Pantera (FAR BEYOND DRIVEN era), Smashing Pumpkins, Meshuggah (three-hour set), and us. I guess it's a festival, probably in Southern California, but we all hang out in Tokyo before and after the show. David Bowie is playing the after-party.

SKRATCH: You guys have to be doing a decent amount of interviews due to the new album coming out recently. At some point, some of the questions have to get old and repetitive. What question are you most tired of answering and why? SCOTTIE: By far, "What's your craziest tour story?" The craziest thing usually happens every day on tour. It's always an adventure, and it's so hard to remember specific events out of something like that. A lot

of the stories are crazy if you were there but probably sound lame to just hear them a year later or two years later or something like that. I don't know.

SKRATCH: Okay, last question: Where do you see Norma Jean heading in the future musically, as a band, and as individuals?
SCOTTIE: Musically, I have no idea. We never really know what is going to come out until we sit down and start writing. We never try to limit ourselves to setting a goal of what we want to sound like or what kind of music we are going to play. If I had to make a guess, though: probably more operatic on the next one. As a band, I hope we continue to tour. As individuals, we're just getting older and having more and more fun every day.

If you're out of the country, you are in luck:
Norma Jean is on tour in
Australia until May 13th.
If you're holed up here in
the warming United States
and haven't been getting
your Norma Jean fix, repent
and head to their Website:
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Myspace and Purevolume.



By Manda-Dex-Punk Photo by Renee McMahon

What would happen to the world if there was some freak accident and everyone within three feet of you and you yourself got fused into one being? Well, if something like that happened to the boys of MxPx, they would still rock out for us all—at least that's what Tom of the band thinks would happen. What does thinks would happen. What does this have to do with their new album PANIC? Ummm...nothing—but, it's a good fact to know right?

Tom was kind enough to answer some questions I had for him on his band and the new release via that e-mailing thing on the Internet (an amazing thing). So kick back and enjoy, all you people in the bath-room stall who need something to read right now.

SKRATCH: PANIC marks your seventh full-length album, correct? That's a lot of albums. I bet you can't list them all, in order, without

looking.
TOM: POKINATCHA, TEENAGE
POLITICS, LIFE IN GENERAL,
SLOWLY GOING THE WAY OF THE BUFFALO, THE EVERPASSING MOMENT, BEFORE EVERY THING AND AFTER, PANIC. No sweat; didn't need to look!

SKRATCH: You've probably been asked this a lot, but what does "MxPx" actually stand for?

TOM: Magnified Plaid. (And yes, we have been asked that many, many, many, many, many times.)

all that time?

TOM: No, we went on tour a bunch, then we sat in the studio for about nine months doing demos. After all that, we recorded the entire record in three weeks.

SKRATCH: Let's say there is a freak accident and all three of you (Mike, Tom, and Yuri) somehow get fused into one being. What would you call your new self? Would it be some odd combination of your

already-existing names?

TOM: Not anything of our existing names. I'd go with Professor Pokinatcha.

SKRATCH: Let's also say this new being had all three of your heads, six arms, and six feet. Do you think you'd still be able to play in a band together like that?

TOM: It might make our live performances kinda boring/scary, but we'd give it a go for sure.

SKRATCH: Your first single, "Heard That Sound", is being played on the radio. Do you still get a special feeling when you hear one of your band's songs played?

TOM: Absolutely. I don't think that feeling will ever go away.

SKRATCH: Why did you decide to release "Heard That Sound" first? Or was it not your decision?

TOM: It was always a song that was in the running [to be released first], and after we played it for a bunch of people, it was for sure. People who we like/respect just reacted really been to you guys? Are you guys like loving brothers or like the kind of brothers who get into fist fights over the remote control?

TOM: We're the kind of brothers who will argue until we're blue in the face and then five minutes later we're all fine.

SKRATCH: I read that politics and world events were major influences on PANIC. Would you care to elaborate on that?

TOM: With the current social/political environment, it's impossible to not be affected. The fear-based mentality that is constantly piped into your home through the 24/7 news channels is adversely shaping the minds of our generation. PANIC is a kind of a parallel dimension to that machine trying to effect positive

SKRATCH: Do you think there should be a separation of politics and music, or do you feel the go best together?

TOM: [It's impossible to] remove the things that affect you in your life and still write music. You could never remove love, politics, social struggle, etc., from music/art.

SKRATCH: If you had to pick a favorite album of yours, which would it be? What makes it so special to you?

TOM: PANIC, hands down. The thing that makes me say that is the process and the songs. process was an amazing breath of fresh air. Recording in our own studio and [doing so] that quickly was exactly what we needed as a band. The songs that came of that

SKRATCH: Where did you guys

"WE'RE THE KIND OF BROTHERS WHO WILL ARGUE UNTIL WE'RE BLUE IN THE FACE ..."

SKRATCH: Have you noticed on a lot of punk/straight-edge/hardcore kids screen names that they have Xs at the beginning and end (and sometimes in the middle) of the name? Do you think your band had a hand in influencing that?

TOM: I'd like to think so, but it's all about the straight-edge

SKRATCH: PANIC is your first studio album since 2003, correct? Have you been in the studio record PANIC?

TOM: We recorded Panic at our studio, the Clubhouse, in Bremerton WA.

SKRATCH: You guys worked with Gavin Mackillop as producer on this album, right? How was working with him?

TŎM: Gavin was a dream to work with. He came up to Bremerton, worked his ass off, and did

feel are far and away our best to

Thanks for the interview, Tom! enjoyed it. I hope the rest of you did Don't forget to check out MxPx's new album, PANIC.



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By Manda-Dex-Punk

Sometimes and interview goes SO well that you wish you had a higher word count so you could include the whole conversation. This is one of those times. Bane from Aaron had a lot to talk about when I called him to discuss the band's new album, THE NOTE. Unfortunately, the first time we did this interview, it all got lost! Thank you, batteries in my tape recorder. But after calling sweet ol' Aaron back, we gave it another go. This is only a tiny sample of our wonderful conversation.

SKRATCH: It's been about three years since you've last released an album, right?

drummer and to teach him the songs. Then, once we decided he was going to be in the band, we decided we would rather tour for a while than start writing new songs with him. We just wanted to get him road-tested, so we did some tours. That took a while. When that was done, some of the guys in Bane started some side projects. Pete and Zach started a band called Silent Drive, and we kinda took a backseat to that for a little while as they recorded records and did touring. Then we had to kinda decide if we wanted to continue being a band, what the future of Bane was going to be. So we said that we still love this, and the new drummer fit really well, so we were going to need to write new

SKRATCH: Who plays that piano

SKRATCH: Who plays that piano interlude on "Pot Committed"?

AARON: That's Zach, our guitar player. He also sang the last verse in "Swan Song". He sings that really melodic verse that a lot of kids seem to like a lot. He was really involved in every aspect of this record. He wrote most of the riffs and was involved in every aspect of the recording process. He was in the studio with everybody—while the drums were being laid down, while my vocals were with everybody—while the drums were being laid down, while my vocals were being laid down...He just really had a vision for how he wanted this record to come out, and he wasn't going to let go of it. Usually he's a little more reserved and he'd never really taken the reigns before, but he started that band Silent Drive, and they put out a record that came out incredibly, and I think that it came him confidence. It was his idea to

SKRATCH: Bane is notorious for

SKRATCH: Bane is notorious for ignoring trends and just kind of doing your own thing.

AARON: Right. That's the road we choose real early on, when we realized that hardcore kids were going to want us to keep doing the same thing over and over again. We wrote a 7" that was real big, in-your-face hardcore. Then when we put out our first record a lot of kids were disappointed that the songs weren't the same. Kids would say to us, "Why don't you play more songs like the old ones? I don't like this new stuff." We realized that we can't worry about what these people want from us. We're not

going to be able to please everyone, and we just have to be able to do what feels right to us five and hope that some kids will get it. We can't be trying to please the hardcore masses, because we'd be fucking driving ourselves crazy all the time. And it wouldn't be beneat. We'd be fucking driving ourselves crazy all the time. And it wouldn't be honest. We'd be writing what we think people want to hear instead of what writing what comes from our hearts. So, we made an early decision that we were not going to worry about what was popular or what was expected of us, that we weren't even really going to worry about what kids liked about us. If kids are disappointed, they're disappointed, but at least fwhat they're disappointed, but at least [what we're doing] is real, at least it comes from a place inside.

SKRATCH: You guys have been around for about 10 years now, cor-

AARON: Right.

SKRATCH: Do you feel kind of old when you're up there on stage and there's a bunch of 14-year-olds in the

front row?

AARON: I have to be honest: sometimes ARON: I have to be honest: sometimes
I do. There are times where I realize that,
wow, your average hardcore fan is a
teenager, and we're definitely not
teenagers anymore and haven't been for
a long, long time. You look around you
and wonder really how much [the kids in
the audience] are relating to you or you
to them. At the same time, there's
nowhere else that I feel as comfortable,
you know? There isn't any place I could
go and feel like I could relate to people
my own age, because those people are so
fucked up, boring, and petty. At least
with hardcore kids there's a degree of
rebellion and a passion. And these kids
are opinionated. So, I dunno. I guess I
definitely still feel a bit of a connection
to the scene at large.

SKRATCH: You've been quoted as saying, "We've been a very lucky band [...] to stay relevant in the scene." Is it real-

AARON: I think that it is—for us, anyway. The more years we've been a band, the harder it's become. A lot of kids feel most connected to bands that haven't existed for a long time before they got into hardcore. Kids like to come along and have bands that they can kind of make their own, that you can see their early shows, get their first records and their demos and see them grow. [In that case] you really feel a part of that band, since you've been there since the beginning. A lot of kids just the beginning. A lot of kids just weren't there for that part of Bane. There's all these great young bands that have come along over the past few years that kids can claim as their own and be really excited about because they're so fucking good. I think it's easier to knock bands like Bane who have been around for a long time, to just be like, "That band needs to just hang it up" or "They're not as cool as they use to be" or any of this other shit.

> ever, and I'm sure hardcore kids from everywhere will have no choice but to agree with me once NOTE. Be sure to check out
> Bane on the Web at
> www.banecentral.com. And here

know about Bane that got cut: they love every aspect of being a band but at the same time they



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The Esoteric By Manda-Dex-Punk

Who has a great sense of humor, great taste in music, and a love for Johnny Depp (besides me)? None other than lead singer for The Esoteric, Steve Cruz. Any relation to Penelope Cruz? I have no idea; I never got the chance to ask him in this e-mail interview. If I ever did get the chance to interview him again, though, you can be sure as hell I'd ask. This time I stuck to some pretty random questions—but I even threw in some about the band's new release, WITH THE SURENESS OF SLEEPWALKING. Steve was nice enough to get these questions back to me within a day. I love a punctual man, don't you?

SKRATCH: Your bio describes you guys as a "powerhouse quintet." Now, I can understand how a group can become a quintet, but I don't

that you guys have played with in the past) asked you guys to get naked and into a hot tub full of M&M's with him. Would you do it? Could I take pictures?

STEVIE: HELL YEAH! We do it all the time-except I prefer Skittles 'cause I like to taste the rainbow, if you know what I mean. And yes, you can take photos.

SKRATCH: You guys consider your music to be genre-defying, don't you? Do you see that as the way music will be in the future?

STEVIE: Well, I think many people consider us to be [genre-defying], and we don't mind. We don't feel like what we are doing is the most innovative thing, but we feel that how we go about it is fresh and necessary right now. We would rather not have a label than be labeled. As far as the

SKRATCH: Tell me something people will find absolutely fascinating about your album, WITH THE SURENESS OF SLEEPWALKING,

STEVIE: WITH THE SURENESS OF SLEEPWALKING was written, recorded, and produced by The Esoteric with the help of Ed Rose. We recorded everything besides the drums by ourselves in our house, and then the house burned down. The songs on the record have been marinating for a long time, and they are ripe and juicy with blood and magic. Plus, the artwork was done by Andy Cummings and both he and his layout are absolutely fascinating!

SKRATCH: Wasn't that polite how I said "please"?

STEVIE: It's very polite of you to do this interview, and "Please Please

SKRATCH: Let's say Reggie from it's coming from our pockets or SKRATCH: Do you mosh? Do you Reggie and the Full Effect (a band someone else's.

SKRATCH: Do you mosh? Do you think if I met you in a mosh pit that you could kick my ass? If I said "Please don't," would you do it anyway, even though I was polite and said "please"?

STEVIE: Let it be known that Stevie Cruz does not mosh (but other members of The Esoteric do), so if I accidentally stumbled into a mosh pit, you might kick my ass. I'm a lover, not a fighter so [...] I would probably ask if you wanted to go listen to The Smiths. I would be polite about it, but I wouldn't say "please," 'cause I don't want to sound desperate.

SKRATCH: Sweet! Consider it a date. What about if we got Into a pillow fight?

STEVIE: A pillow fight is kinda new territory for me, so I'm not too sure about that one. I'm a quick learner, and because I tour all the time, my wrists are very much in shape.

SKRATCH: You guys are from Lawrence, KS. Do you think where you're from affects the way you guys sound?

STEVIE: To a great degree our environment definitely affects our art. Lawrence is a very liberal and community-based town, both musically and politically. Most cities I've been to have a bunch of bands all trying to bite each other's style, and it's real competitive. In Lawrence, everyone does their own thing. You could come to our shows, and there

would be an electronic artist, a hiphop group, and a weird rock band playing with us. The audience would be just as diverse, 'cause that's how Lawrence is. I've always found that interesting.

SKRATCH: Speaking of Kansas, do you guys like THE WIZARD OF OZ at all? If they made a remake of that movie—like they did WILLY WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE

WHETHER IT'S COMING FROM OUR POCKETS OR SOMEONE ELSE'S."

STEVIE: It's too bad people associate THE WIZARD OF OZ with Kansas all the time. There really are a lot of other great works of art to come out of the state.

SKRATCH: What if they had Johnny Depp playing Dorothy and Scooby Doo playing Toto? Would you see it then?

STEVIE: I'll watch anything with Johnny Depp. I've watched the entire first season of 21 JUMP STREET like three times!

Wow, I think I'm in love. Check out The Esoteric's Website at www.theesoteric.com while I try to find this guy's phone number.



Esoteric have become a 'powerhouse" by eating their Wheaties whenever they can and rawking as much as possible. It also doesn't hurt to do calf exercises every day.

SKRATCH: Your band has been around since '96, correct? Does '96 hold any other special memories for you guys?

STEVIE: '96 kicks!...at least for some of the older band members, 'cause I think some graduated high school then and I bet that's what they wrote in each others yearbooks. 1996 was also a great year for music in the Lawrence/K.C. scene. Bands like Coalesce, Season to Risk, Molly McGuire, and Shiner were all kicking our ass, not to mention all the sick grind-core that some of us were obsessed with. everything as one big scene; but as long as people who don't play music make money from music, there will always be labels and categories, 'cause that's how they sell "products."

SKRATCH: Looking at your bio, I noticed that you guys seem to go on self-financed tours a lot. Is there a reason for that?

STEVIE: No one will ever care or know of your band unless you get out in people's face as much as possible. For us, that meant selffinanced tours and recordings. If you're out there working it yourself all the time, someone will notice that you're a hard-working band, and eventually they might invest in you. We are a good investment, whether

SKRATCH: Yes, I do, actually. I love them. The Esoteric seem to play a lot of hardcore and metal festivals. Do you ever feel like growing a mullet?

STEVIE: When we are lucky, we'll catch a few "business in the front, party in the back"-type of cuts; but we wish we saw more, 'cause it really makes your day. At the moment, I don't have a mullet, but I've been known to rawk one from time to

SKRATCH: What's your favorite

song off of your new album? STEVIE: My favorite song from WITH THE SURENESS OF SLEEP-WALKING is "Mapping the Fall", because it sums up the record and hints at the next one. It's a wicked jammer, if you know what I mean.







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TEAM SLEEP

"I think we strive to avoid direct influences more than demonstrated influences more than demonstrated influences more than the demonstrated influences in the stripe in t

most bands; however, you can't live in a vacuum."

Team Sleep By Mike SOS

You've heard the whispers and all of the rumors, but finally the band known as Team Sleep has put out an album. After a four-year delay, the California outfit featuring Deftones frontman Chino Moreno has released its debut album and is currently supporting the effort on the road.

When catching up with guitarist Todd Wilkinson via e-mail, we spoke about why it took so long for the album to get out there, as well as the way in which the band works and what to expect from this lushly melodic trip-hop rock crew.

SKRATCH: How did Team Sleep initially form?

TODD: Chino and I started making music together a long time ago. We bought a four-track and started by recording layered melodies. I would give the tapes to Chino and a couple other friends. At that time we didn't intend to make a record, just to have fun.

SKRATCH: Who came up with the band name?

TODD: Chino came up with the name. The music is a bit sleepy and our line-up is a bit loose, like a team.

SKRATCH: What sets Team Sleep apart from other rock bands and your other projects?

TODD: The way we write music is different from other bands. We each write our parts and demo them by recording at home. The other music I make makes a lot less sense. I record a lot at home, improvising layers of guitars. It's a similar mood to Team Sleep, but not in songs.

SKRATCH: How would you describe Team Sleep's music to someone who's never heard you guys before?

TODD: The contrast between live instruments and Crook's electronic stuff is very important. There is also the contrast between Zach's chaotic drumming and my mellow guitar playing. I think the music has a warm feeling to it. The sequence of songs on the record is significant. We wanted to end it with an optimistic feeling, so we choose the song

"11:11"

SKRATCH: What were some of the advantages and disadvantages of the album being done over a long period of time and worked on by many different producers and musicians?

TODD: We made the record at our own pace, when we felt like working on it, without being rushed. It was hard for all of us to manage other obligations, but we stayed true to our best intentions most of the time. We recorded on everything from cassette four-track recorders to high-end studios. At the end of the recording process we were able to look back at what he had done and pick the best stuff. Having a range of sonic textures gives the record more character. We were lucky to have the opportunity to work with whomever we wanted. All three of the producers we worked with (Terry Date, Greg Wells, and Ross Robinson) have very different styles, and we got to pick and choose what we liked best.

SKRATCH: Are there more Team Sleep tracks lying around not on the album that may surface one day?

TODD: We have several B-sides that haven't been released. We just mastered five of them, two of which are being released with the single "Ever" very soon. The others will surface sooner or later.

SKRATCH: Is there another Team Sleep album in the works? TODD: We have at least 15 songs

demoed for another record. I have several others that the rest of the guys haven't heard yet. Chino will be on tour with Deftones later this year. At that time, the rest of us will begin recording another record.

SKRATCH: How does a Team Sleep song get written?

TODD: It's difficult to make sense out of our process, because there's always an exception. However, they usually come about in one of two ways: I'll write a melody and bring it to Zach, we'll track the drums, and then I'll write more guitar parts; or Crook will give me a drum machine beat and I'll write parts over it, then we give the music to Chino to work on vocals.

SKRATCH: Being that you were in the studio so long with this release, what are some of the easiest and hardest things about bringing the delicate Team Sleep sound to the stage?

TODD: We turn into a rock band for the live shows. It's hard not to do with Zach as our drummer, because he's very loud. Also, when you get two guitars in one room, each keeps getting louder and louder.

SKRATCH: Being visible artists from the band's inception, is it easier or harder to get Team Sleep off the ground?

TODD: There are some difficulties that we face that other bands don't. However, it has been much easier for us than other bands.

SKRATCH: Who are some of your musical influences?

TODD: I think we strive to avoid direct influences more than most bands; however, you can't live in a vacuum. I suppose that if I had to pick, it would be Smashing Pumpkins, The Cure, and Bad Brains.

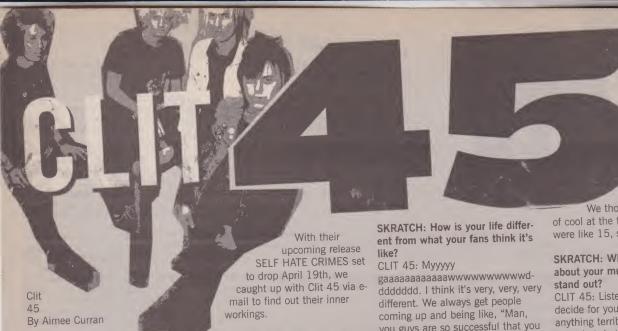
SKRATCH: What does the rest of 2005 look like for Team Sleep?

TODD: We've been across the U.S., and now we're going to Europe in a couple days. After that, we plan to go to Australia, Japan, then back to the U.S. for a few more shows.

SKRATCH: Any final words for the fans?

TODD: Thanks for being patient





Sex, drugs, punk rock. Not too exciting to say, since it seems many in L.A. have been there and done that. However, if you are not familiar with Clit 45, you might want to pay attention. Formed some time in the '90s, this motley crew of misfit teens got together and started banging out songs. With a few recordings here and there, a small following seems to have blossomed into Clit 45's becoming a household name...well, at least in punk-rock households.

SKRATCH: What makes it worth you time to be in Clit 45?

CLIT 45: Putting years of your life and heart and soul into something that is totally fucked and yields no rewards at all. Oh, wait, that is the worst part. We just got our copies of our new record. That's pretty cool. Touring, traveling, making awesome friends, all that jazz—that's pretty cool. And the tons of free drugs and girls aren't that bad, either.

CLIT 45: Myyyyy gaaaaaaaaaaaawwwwwwwwwwddddddd. I think it's very, very, very different. We always get people coming up and being like, "Man, you guys are so successful that you must have it so easy"—blah blah blah, when in actuality I work two jobs to support myself (well, when I actually make it to work). Lots of kids don't realize how much hard work and time go into a band. But whatever, that's cool. It's not for

SKRATCH: Where did the name "Clit 45" come from?

them to worry about, anyway, is it?

CLIT 45: Actually, the person who named the band isn't even in it anymore. I think it had something to do

can't be quite sure.

We thought it sounded kind of cool at the time. At the time we were like 15, so go figure.

with sex and violence, but I

SKRATCH: Why should people care about your music? What makes you stand out?

CLIT 45: Listen to the record and decide for yourself. We're not doing anything terribly original, not by a long shot, but I think the type of music we're playing hasn't been done in a while or done that well, so....

SKRATCH: Best show?

CLIT 45: Ever? The Palace with The Casualties and A Global Threat a couple of years ago was pretty amazing. Huge. We played the L'X in Montreal last summer, and that was pretty punk—a few hundred weirdo French Canadians going nuts pouring beer on you, jumping off



balconies, giving away tons of PCP. SKRATCH: What are your plans The soundperson was the girl from ANOTHER STATE OF MIND who talks about beating up people and stealing their money and stuff. She's kind of an older lady now, but that was pretty awesome. Bonjour, Puto!

SKRATCH: What would you be doing if you weren't in a band?

CLIT 45: I'd probably have a real

money, a nice place, nice stuff,

a nice place to sleep.

traveling, being a jet-setting play-

boy.... I settled for the pool of beer

next to the keg. Ehh, whatever. It's

a cool job, a girlfriend, have tons of

for the rest of 2005?

CLIT 45: We're touring Canada and the U.S. all Spring with The Lower Class Brats. This summer we're hoping to go to Europe, do more U.S. supporting dates, maybe Japan in the fall—who knows? Touring, touring...It's never boring. La la la.

SKRATCH: Would you live homeless for 10 ears if it

neant making t really fucking big at the age of 45?

SKRATCH: Would you eat a moldy sandwich to convince someone to buy your CD?

CLIT 45: I wouldn't even fucking talk to someone to convince them to buy our CD.

SKRATCH: Anything go through your head while you are perform-

CLIT 45: Hmmm...l dunno. If it's goin' well and I'm psyched, I think about how psyched I am. If it's going bad, I get totally bummed and try not to look totally bummed. If all is going smoothly, I switch into autopilot and just think about...! dunno, laundry,

SKRATCH: Do you want to be famous?

CLIT 45: I'd love to be worshipped from afar.

SKRATCH: Raspberry or strawberry jam?

CLIT 45: Dude, really. "If you were a salad dressing, what type would you be?" I would be ranch, because I'm smooth and creamy.

SKRATCH: What do you want your fans to leave your show with? CLIT 45: A headache.

SKRATCH: What would be the best way for your fans to

totally boring F IT'S GOING BAD, L GET TOTA

> LIT 45: Naw. that S. Who wants to be successful when they're a salty old queer?

life-would've gone to school, have SKRATCH: Three most important things to being a musician?

CLIT 45: 1. Practice 2. Patience 3. Stand yer ground. Ehh, that's cheesy. Whatever.

things [...] Then I look at the crowd and realize how ugly our fans are and get bummed out again.

SKRATCH: Favorite word to describe something?

CLIT 45: Ohhhhhhh, I love words. "My god," "actually," "true," "bummed," "psyched," "fucked," "mega," "awesome," "mega awe-some," "dude," "party," "ridiculously," "derailed."

describe your music?

CLIT 45: I really don't care. Postmillenium street core.

SKRATCH: What do you want to see more of in the music industry? CLIT 45: Nothing. Everyone should just stop what they're doing and take a break-no labels, no bands, no new records, nothing.

Check out more on Clit 45 at www.clit45.net.

Darkest Hour isn't like many of your typical suteme metal outlins. Fur one, they have a sense of humor (aptly shown on their letest DVD PARTY SCARS AND PRISON BARS). They also as quitarist Mike Schleibaum explains via e-mail-have a tirm background in the punk tock scene, which makes their music, especially the new UNDOING RUIN, that must more scalning than other bands' endeavors. Get to know this fierce group by reading on.

SKRATCH: How did Darkest Hour form?

MIKE: We started as a high school metal, hardcore band when John (the singer) and I were like 16. We just kept at it for so long that at some point it turned into a real band. We had many lineup changes due to the fact that we foured all the time, but we have settled into a pretty active lineup as of 2001.

SKRATCH: What sets Darkest Hour apart from other metal bands?

bands?
MIKE: Well, one word, punk
Darkest Hour is a mix of hardcore, metal and punk. A lot of
bands nowadays miss that
third element. We play music
for the rejected by the rejected. We believe in music as a
community and that it should
be accessible to all. Also, we
carry a lot of eithics around
that, for better or worse,
makes Darkest Hour who we
are Now we aren't the most
punk band in the world, eithertimean, we did Ozzlest but we
feel we have found a happy mean, we all Ozzlest-but we teel we have found a happy

SKRATCH: Tell us how you guys wound up on Victory. How has the relationship been thus tar? MIKE: Well we were signed to MIA Records, and they lolded.

MIA Records, and they loided We shopped around and tound Victory had the best ofter. They have treated us great, and we love all the dudes who work over there.

SKRATCH: Tell us about the latest DVD, PARTY SCARS AND PRISON BARS. Why

DARKES

release a DVD now? What can we expect to see here that we may not have known about Darkest Hour?

MIKE. Well, we have always wanted to release a DVD, and while we were in between records, it just seemed to make sense. I think that the thing you most come away from the DVD with is a feeling of knowing the band more. I mean, our personalities come out in the DVD, and I think that is really special nowadays. To have a personality in a world where so much music is calculated and planned is what most bands need.

SKRATCH: After compiling the DVD, is there anything on it that you're embarrassed about? Anything that didn't make it to the DVD that we can count on seeing later? MIKE Well, there is a ton of stuff we couldn't use because it would have been rated X, and some stuff that would have gotten us arrested I would say that if you see us at a show come up and we'll tell you about it. That is the best your gonna get.

SKRATCH: Describe the process of recording UNDO-ING RUIN. Where did you guys record and with whom?

Any funny recording stories you'd like to share?

MIKE: We recorded the record in Vancouver BC, with Devon Townsend It was a great time, and most of the funny stories revolve around Devin drinking too much Tim Horton's coffee and us spending too much time in Mugs and Jugs (you can figure out what that is).

SKRATCH: Which song was the easiest to record? Hardest? The one you fee came out the best? MIKE: Well, no song was easy.

but I would say renain things were easier harder this time. We spent more time on the drums, so Ryan got pushed like crazy. We also spent more time working on vocals and bass. The guitars we always spend way too much time on anyway, I would say the easiest thing about recording the record was taking chances. We were all more willing to do that, and I think that made it a more exciting experience.

SKRATCH: How is UNDOING RUIN different than other

AUIN different than other Darkest Hour records? MIKE Well the songs are different tempos. The sound of the record is different in a lot of ways. There are more guitar soles and more guitar-based parts. The songs are shorter and have a much less political and more personal edge to them.

SKILLOH How has growing up in Maryland shaped your

up in Maryland shaped your music?

MIKE: Well I grew up in Virginia but growing up in the DC scene kind of gave us a more DIV punk ethic that a lot of bigger [busier] bands missout on or don't have. It is kind of our driving conscience.

SKRATCH: What's your take on the current state of metal? MIKE: All I can say is that most of it is insincers and plastic. There are some good bands out there but you have to pick through a lot to find them.

SKRATCH: How does a Darkest Hour song get writ-

ten: MIKE: It's all based off riffs

ences? Any we wouldn't be able to pick up on by listening to you? MIKE: I hop you can tell that we listen to Huev Lewis and Hoey Lewis and the News, Phil Collins, Journey, and The Randy Macho Man Savage rap tape. Who knows

SKRATCH: Where is your tavorite place to play and why? play, and why?
MIKE Well, at home (DC)
is fun or Florida California.
Budapest Hungary.
Croatia, Iceland, Japan.
There are so many good
dudes out there!

SKRATCH: How would you explain your music to some-one who never heard you before?

SKRATCH: Do you prefer the studio or a

gig, and why? MIKE: Himmin. The grass always greener so right studio.

SKRATCH: How did you guys land a spot on the Warped

MIKE. Well, we beat the guys over at Smartpunk in strip poker, and rather then get naked and go to in-N-Out Burger to get us food, they decided to add us to the tour. Sad move, dudes.

SKRATCH: What's the best and worst part about tour-

ing?
MIKE Best meeting new friends and rocking Worst lack of sleep and missing your dudes at home.

SKRATCH: Whom would you guys like to tour with that you haven't yet?

MIKE Entombed, Converge, Isis, The Faint Clutch and most of all, Randy Macho Man Savane.

SKRATCH: What can we expect from Darkest Hour for the rest of 2005?
MIKE: Tour, tour, tour, tour, and more jail time.

SKRATCH: What keeps Darkest Hour still going after all this time?
MIKE Dudes hanging with dudes getting brutal for dudes. Oh, and a few dudettes.

SKRATCH: What would you like to accomplish that you haven't done thus far?
MIKE: four with from Maiden, put out a rap record with Randy Macho Man, own a strip club, and pants Sean Hannity.

SKRATCH: Any final words for the lans?
Nope. See ya in the circle pit Thanks for doing the interview.

"MOST OF THE FUNNY STORIES REVOLVE AROUND DEVIN DRINKING TOO MUCH TIME HORTON'S COFFEE AND US SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME IN MUGS AND JUGS..."



Bleed the Dream By Manda-Dex-Punk

band hailing from that sunny ient. state of California. Even though the remaining members have SKRATCH: Exactly. gone through some hard times DAVE: I would have had to gone still has a sense of humor about guards. himself.

call me back. It seems he was in bodyguards? line at Wal-Mart. Buying what? DAVE: Christina Aguilera does. Well, Dave is a nice guy, so he told me in this interview.

SKRATCH: Hey, what's up? DAVE: Nothing, just calling you your drummer Scott passed back. I was in Wal-Mart buying a sewing kit for my Jeep.

SKRATCH: You couldn't get it anywhere else but Wal-Mart? DAVE: Well, you know how it You guys decided to still go on is: you gotta go to Wal-Mart, the Warped Tour, though, 'cause everyone always wants right? something. [You gotta] get DAVE: Yeah. The four of us

Wal-Mart? That's cool.

outside right now.

SKRATCH: I have to ask this SKRATCH: Pretty sad. (I'm sure you get it all the DAVE: Yeah, the whole situation to Christina Aguilera? DAVE: No, I don't.

SKRATCH: It's kind of funny: you two have the same last SKRATCH: Your voicemail industry (although she's a little right now. pop singer and you're a gui- DAVE: Oh! I didn't change my tarist).

about it is that we both have calling me. Spanish last names and we're both light blondes with white SKRATCH: 'Cause they think skin.

Mexican or something.

DAVE: Yeah, she claims to be. cents or something ridiculous. [...]

know, if you two started dat- Wal-Mart. ing, it would be just like Tom DAVE: Exactly. That's why we Cruise and Penelope Cruz.

DAVE: Oh, I know, dude. It's kind of funny, 'cause we've actu- SKRATCH: You have a new one time.

SKRATCH: If you two got April 26th-so it's been out for a married, you wouldn't have to little over a month. It's been sell-

change your last names. You should have asked her right then.

Bleed the Dream is a wonderful DAVE: It would be so conven-

recently, guitarist Dave Aguilera through her plethora of body-

SKRATCH: Who goes to a I gave Dave a call, and he had to strip club with a plethora of

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Good answer. [Changing the subject] Within the past two months, away, right?

DAVE: Yeah, almost two months

SKRATCH: That really sucks.

everyone's crap at the same time. have always been tough people who've said, you know, no mat-SKRATCH: You have a nice ter what happens, we just keep little echo going on. Where are moving forward. He did everything he could; he gave it his all DAVE: Uh, inside Wal-Mart to play on the record. There was no way we were just going to let that go away without doing any-SKRATCH: You're still in thing for it. We're kinda out here not only for us but for him, too, DAVE: [Laughs] I'm walking so that people can hear what he put on the record.

time): do you have any relation really sucks. We're doing the best we can. It's just kinda how life is sometimes. It deals you a card, and you deal with it.

name and work in the same said you were up in Canada

voicemail yet? I kind of like it, DAVE: I know. The funny part though: it keeps people from

you're busy.

DAVE: Exactly. My bill was SKRATCH: She claims to be crazy. It was, like, a dollar a minute to be on the phone or 89

SKRATCH: Well, hey, you can SKRATCH: [Laughs] You afford it-'cause you shop at

shop at Wal-Mart.

ally met her. That was like a big album, BUILT BY BLOOD, joke. We met her at a strip bar coming out, correct? Or it just came out?

DAVE: Yeah, it just came out

We're pretty stoked. And then alone? right now, 'cause now we can alone: I'm in a band. really start pushing the record in the States.

SKRATCH: Is it available at DAVE: The whole band is. We're Wal-Mart? Did you happen to driving to our next show. see it while you were in there?

ing so good so far, considering SKRATCH: Are you going to we weren't even in the country be listening to that when we're the whole time it was released. done since you're...Are you

we're really stoked to be home DAVE: No, I'm not. I'm never

SKRATCH: Who else is with you?



"I'm never alone, I'm in a band."

able at Wal-Mart just yet. I think next show at? it might be soon—but it's avail- DAVE: It is in Lancaster, CA. able at everywhere else, like Best Buy, Sam Goodie...you SKRATCH: Kinda far. name it, pretty much anywhere. DAVE: Middle of nowhere. That's the whole thing we did when the record first came out. SKRATCH: We were still traveling across the nowhere." Very nice. any shows; we were just travel- from Lancaster. ing on our way to Canada. We every city.

DAVE: Yeah, that's the most agree with me. They're like, exciting thing. [From] all your "Yeah, it IS the middle of hard work, you know, to actually nowhere." have something happen from it. That's the amazing part. We're SKRATCH: Are you guys real stoked about that.

SKRATCH: What can fans going to change it up? expect from BUILT BY DAVE: Eh, change it up. off your EP AWAKE?

both of those albums, just more.

favorite song on BUILT BY most of our writing. BLOOD?

DAVE: I would say it's gotta be "Emotion Regression". It's one Be sure to check out Bleed the of those songs you pop in and Dream in your car, and it just makes you see them sometime this summer think. It's kind of a thinkin' song. at the Warped Tour. Whatever's on your mind at the time, it'll kinda bring that up in your memory bank.

DAVE: I don't think it is avail- SKRATCH: Where's your

U.S. We weren't really playing DAVE: No offense to people

would stop everywhere and look SKRATCH: Um, who cares? for it. We found it in pretty much They're in the middle of nowhere.

DAVE: Yeah. They wouldn't SKRATCH: That's pretty cool. care, anyways; they'd probably

> going to be playing the same set all Warped Tour, or are you

BLOOD that they didn't get Probably like halfway through we might throw in a new song DAVE: It's a little bit of every- we've been working on or something we have on AWAKE and thing. We've going to take advan-ASLEEP-it's just a little more tage of this year's Warped Tour to mature side of it. We've got a really write our next record. We couple heavier songs on there want to put a record out in May [...] It's everything you can get on of next year. We don't want to have like a month to write it. We're going to spend this whole SKRATCH: What's you're next 11 months or whatever to do

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RAND ZI 34' Brand New Sin By Mike SOS

Back with their superb sophomore effort, RECIPE FOR DISASTER, good old-fashioned, shit-kicking rock 'n' roll is what Syracuse's Brand New Sinbring to the table.

We caught up with lead throat Joe Altier via e-mail and got his thoughts on his new label (Century Media), his take on the new album, and a whole lot more. Grab your favorite beverage (the BNS boys prefer cheap-ass vodka and whiskey), and read on.

SKRATCH: How did Brand New Sin form?
JOE: Brand New Sin was formed out of the ashes
of a band called Godbelow [...] in September
2001. Godbelow was looking to change and
began a vocalist search. They tried out like 17
guys before I came in. Once I came in, the search
was over, and here we are today.

SKRATCH: What sets Brand New Sin apart from

other metal bands?

JOE: I think what sets us apart is that we are in the land between rock and metal. We are a bunch of headbangers who play rock 'n' roll. We are a rock band at heart with heavy-metal influences.

SKRATCH: Tell us how you guys wound up on Century Media. How the relationship has been thus far?

thus far?
JOE: Man, this is one long-ass story, and neither of us have the time. To make it short: first label goes bankrupt, next label puts us through hell and tries to make BNS something we are not. We never record a CD for them and ask for our release, and Century Media is there waiting with smiles. So far, it's been a pleasure, and we are looking forward to a long and successful run with them. Their track record speaks for itself.

them. Their track record speaks for itself.

SKRATCH: Describe the process of recording RECIPE FOR DISASTER. Where did you guys record and with who? Any funny recording stories you'd like to share?

JOE: Well, the writing took us a year-and-a-half (not by choice), but the process of recording was amazing. We don't waste time in the studio. We record all the drums, bass, and rhythm guitars live. The only overdubs that are done are vocals and guitar solos-and we are pretty quick. We had a vision of this record and busted ass to get it done. We recorded and mixed this record in four weeks. We recorded here in Syracuse at the same studio where we did the first CD and with the same guy helming the knobs, Pete Walker. I guess the funniest thing about the studio is how much cheap-ass vodka we drank. We must have gone through a gallon a day. The plastic gallons just kept piling up. And the last song we recorded was the acoustic song "Runnin' Alone". We recorded it Guns N' Roses LIES-style, with me singing, three acoustic guitars, one kick drum, and two bottles of Early Times whiskey. We wanted that dirty, backwoods porch feeling, and the best way to do that is to get hopped up on whiskey.

SKRATCH: Which song was the easiest to record? hardest? the one you feel came out the best?

JOE: The easiest were a few. We had been playing quite a few live already for a few months, so there were like five of those. The hardest was probably either "Once in a Lifetime" or "Another Reason". The one I was most surprised at how it sounded from start to finish of recording



SKRATCH: How does a Brand New Sin song get written?
JOE: 90% of all BNS songs start with a riff; then a groove, then we interject some melodies, then some lyrics, and wham: BNS.

SKRATCH: Who are some of your musical influences? Any we wouldn't be able to pick up on by listening to you?
JOE: Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Metallica, Danzig, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, COC, Pantera, Down, Black Label Society, Megadeth, and many, many more. Basically, if it's good, it influenced us. I guess some of my off-thewall influences would be Garth Brooks, Otis Redding, and The Eagles.

SKRATCH: Where is your favorite place to play,

JOE: That's another tough one, but I think I speak for all my boys when I say the Machine Shop in Flint, Michigan. Kevin and Craig Zink are the two most bad-ass club owners and promoters in the country. They know how to take care of a band and the fans. Plus, Flint just plain rocks.

SKRATCH: How would you explain your music to someone who never heard you before?

JOE: AC/DC meets Metallica meets Lynyrd

Skynyrd meets pure rock 'n' roll.

SKRATCH: "When I'm not in Brand New Sin, I'm..."?

JOE: At a local watering hole, listening to bands, and getting my drink on.

SKRATCH: Do you prefer the studio or a gig, and

why?

JOE: I like both for certain reasons, but playing live is by far my favorite. I played football for 12 years, and the only other time I have felt the same rush is on stage with Brand New Sin.

SKRATCH: What advice would you give to aspiring musicians? JOE: Be careful, be very, very careful. Follow your heart, and never compromise your band or its music for anyone. Be yourself.

"We are from blue-collar families, bluecollar neighborhoods, blue-collar towns, blue-collar jobs, and a blue-collar city. Does that explain it?"

"Vicious Cycles".

SKRATCH: How is RECIPE FOR DISASTER dif-JOE: I think we have matured more as a band, and it shows in all the songs. I think we have found the BNS sound. Lastly, we recorded this on better studio equipment and had more time to

SKRATCH: How has growing up in New York shaped your music?
JOE: We are from blue-collar families, blue-collar neighborhoods, blue-collar towns, blue-collar jobs, and a blue-collar city. Does that explain it?

SKRATCH: What's your take on the current state of metal? JOE: I love it. We can never have enough.

SKRATCH: What's the best and worst part about touring?
JOE: The best is playing every day, seeing the country/world, and meeting new people. The worst: never getting enough sleep.

SKRATCH: Whom would you guys like to tour with that you haven't yet?

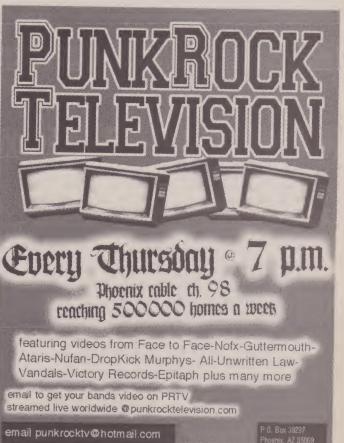
JOE; by top three are Metallica, Iron Maiden, and Ozzfest.

SKRATCH: What can we expect from Brand New Sin for the rest of 2005? JOE: Tour, tour, tour, video, radio, tour, tour, European tour, video, radio, tour, tour, tour.

SKRATCH: Any final words for the fans? JOE: Buy our album. See you on the road.









The Academy Is... By Luke Skywalker

Maybe you've heard of The Academy Is... and its frontman William Beckett from all the recent press they've received, or perhaps this is you're first occasion. In either case, SKRATCH had the opportunity to speak to William back in April and again through e-mail this past May.

SKRATCH: Where are you right now?

WILLIAM: I am in the third bench of our beast-van en route to Oklahoma City, OK. We just passed a road sigh that said "Red Rock" with an offramp. You know the place.

SKRATCH: I keep reading about how young you guys are. Is this to your advantage or disadvantage?

WILLIAM: I've had some trouble with this question in the past, and there may have been a few days when I felt as if being young was a disadvantage; but I had this amazing conversation with a new friend when we were in L.A. about a week ago, and I think he may have convinced me the way I'd been thinking was wrong. If I'm a 20-year-old man in this position, doing things on my terms, and people are excited and even inspired by our passion, ambition, and honesty in our music, and we're just getting started, The Academy Is... is at a huge advan-

SKRATCH: Every article or review about you guys mentions the former feud of

"William Beckett vs. Mike Carden." Was it really something, or is just hype?

WILLIAM: [Laughs] To be perfectly frank, we really didn't like each other at all. But for me at that time, coming up in suburban Chicago's local scene as a solo singer/songwriter and not as some five-piece band that sounds like Saves the Day, I wasn't on anyone's friends list. [The feud was] very true, but we were both visionaries. Then, time passed. We ran into each other at a local show about two years ago and began talking about what records we've been into lately. From that point, we began writing together, have gone through a lot of changes, and we finally feel solid band stability. We're like brothers-all of

SKRATCH: I hear that you may be going on your first headlining tour?

WILLIAM: YES. THE FIRST HEAD-LINING TOUR FOR THE ACADE-MY IS...! We'll be heading out starting June 30 through July 34 with an amazing cast of bands and friends: The Plain White T's, Days Away, and June. This tour, hands down, will be the best time for both fans and bands in all the history of debut headlining tours...we hope.

SKRATCH: Plans for the summer also include some Warped Tour dates. How are you feeling about that? WILLIAM: As far as Warped goes, I am probably a bit too excited. It's going to be our first stint on the Warped Tour, but we went to Warped for years and

had the best time of our summers there. I am most excited about giving people that feeling that I had being at Warped as a fan. I want to help highlight their summers with smiles, sweat, and singalongs. Rock 'n' roll.

SKRATCH: Your album went on sale in February. How has ALMOST HERE faired with your fans so far?

WILLIAM: All we have for reference, besides some weekly record sale numbers, are the shows that we play, to go out there and SEE for yourself how it's going. And what I see from the stage is one of the most magical things taking place. We don't have big, majorlabel marketing budgets, we don't have big deals with Target and Best Buy yet, so the only way for us to get our record out there has been TOUR, TOUR, TOUR, TOUR. And that's what we've been doing. Nothing feels better than coming to Salt Lake once before our record was out and then coming back a month later and have people singing back at me words that I wrote and dancing and crowd-surfing. Crazy. When someone tells you that they saw you for the first time tonight and it was one of the best performances they've ever seen and give your hand a hearty shake or you a big hug, those things are real. That's how I gauge success. We've just caught a slight whiff of it so far, and we'll continue to follow our gut.

SKRATCH: It's not a very long album. Did you not have enough material or enough time, or is this just how you wanted it?

WILLIAM: Well, the week before we left to record the album, we had a few variables to work out. One, we had roughly 16 songs. We were only allowed two-and-ahalf weeks in the studio to record the album, so Mike and I knew we had to be 100% prepared with our best songs. So we took a week of preproduction, reworked the songs between the two of us, and ended up with 11 songs we loved. We projected that we could fit the songs into the time we'd been given. As time passed in the studio, we ended up having to cut one song in order to take the proper time on the other 10. You see, two-and-a-half weeks is a very short time to record a record. But James Paul Wisner did an amazing job. We loved working with him, and the record is perfect for what we need to show the world at this point.

SKRATCH: Can you tell me about the song Down"? Have you been to the Hollywood Hills before? WILLIAM: "Slow Down" can be interpreted a couple different ways. One is that I'm talking about a relationship that is failing because one person in the relationship isn't true: they're plastic, they have fronts, they mislead, manipulate. Everyone has been in a relationship like this, be it with a girlfriend, boyfriend, sister, father, friend, etc. But my intention was perhaps have people read into it a bit deeper and see the other "over-dramatic actors" that I'm referring to. In my opinion, a lot of popular music now falls into the same category as the lying, cheating best friend. I've been to



Hollywood Hills and L.A. and the Beverly Hills parties, and I've seen some plastic people. "Slow Down" is sort of a call to arms for everyone to confront the "over-dramatic actors" in their lives and set yourself right. Don't be manipulated or played for a fool.

SKRATCH: "Black

we're doing with our music. We're also saying, "Hey, this is us. This is my voice." It's real, we're real people. Love it or leave it, we're here. We write music for ourselves and other people who love music; we don't write songs for SKRATCH's album review, we write songs for each individual person at SKRATCH who is a Mamba" is certainly an music-lover. We want to cut to interesting song, espe- the core of people. And this

was moving me, then I heard the new Kings of Leon record, and that changed. Since then, we've been rocking Spoon's GIMME SHELTER, the new Queens of the Stone Age, Ryan Adams...oh, and of course our all-time classics: Zeppelin, Floyd, Buckley...and my latest fix, the new Motion City Soundtrack.

...two-and-a-half weeks is a very short time

cially from my perspective as a writer/reviewer. Can you explain your passion and reasoning behind it?

WILLIAM: "Black Mamba" isn't just a middle finger to music critics and magazines. We don't hate ROLLING STONE or SKRATCH or ALTERNATIVE PRESS. This song is about our dire need for change. It's about standing up and screaming what we believe at the top of our lungs. Bare bones. Letting go of boundaries and limitations and breaking lose, stripped of uncertainties, and running in the direction of your dreams. That's exactly what

includes people who to record a record think they're jaded and they hate everything. Stop and breathe for a second. Why are we doing this? BECAUSE WE FUCKING LOVE MUSIC. We love the feeling we get. It's as simple as that. I think people forget that sometimes.

SKRATCH: Besides ALMOST HERE, what other music are you listening to now?

WILLIAM: We've been rocking some really great newer records, actually. A few months back I was so upset that nothing new coming out

SKRATCH: If you had to choose a profession other than rock star, what would you want to be, and why?

WILLIAM: I would've become a writer-a novelist or a journalist, perhaps. I would probably be what you're doing. Carpe diem, man.

William and the rest of The Academy Is... can be seen on the Vans Warped Tour this sum-





Outsmarting Simon By Mandadexpunk

Vocalist/guitarist Greg and bassist/vocalist of Outsmarting Simon were nice enough to cram together in front of a computer screen and answer these questions I e-mailed to them about the tour they just finished and their new release, STAND UP STRAIGHT (out sometime in April).

SKRATCH: Describe your town of New Brunswick, NJ, to ignorant folk like myself. Is it a beer-drinking, blue-collar town with masses of dive bars?

PJ: New Brunswick is an interesting place, because it is a college town with a business district surrounded by poorer, working-class families. This leads to situations where college kids look down on a lot of the local people, and there can be a lot of crime due to the disparate lifestyles. But all in all, it's a great place. There are always a ton of people around, even in the summers, when school's out. There are many different bars for many different types of people. If you'd prefer to drink with Joe College and his buddies, there are a few bars on the main strip. Want to hang out with the punks or the hippies? There are places for that, too. There are a lot of houses that do shows in the basements, which is always an amazing experience; and there are a ton of bands popping up daily. So, basically, if you want to do pretty much anything, you can do it in New Brunswick. And if you're into music, it's an amazing place to be.

SKRATCH: Tell me about your band name. Who is outsmarting Simon, and why? GREG: The band name is something we've all basically forgotten about. We started playing, and then at some point, like all bands, we needed a name. So we threw out a bunch of names, and Kelly suggested "Outsmarting Simon." It just seemed to work. Nobody was really against it, so we took it. It was a name, we needed one, and now we have one. We're not particularly fond of it—but who cares?

SKRATCH: I understand that you're a collegiate bunch with engineering, English, and music degrees. Tell me about your college days and how your fine education has helped you in everyday life.

PJ: College as a whole was a great experience for me. I met some amazing people, I met the band, and I learned a lot about many different, exciting subjects. As far as college, I'd say just constantly being exposed to academia, and the intelligentsia helps to force you to think bigger and bolder. Individually, the degrees contributed somewhat, I suppose. My English classes forced me to think more critically about what I was saying and how I was saying it. Furthermore, one of the lines of my first full song lyrics for the band was lifted from a poem I was reading in an English class. A bit more obviously, my music classes allowed me to explore more movement through time and key changes that perhaps I would not have been as comfortable with otherwise. GREG: I don't know if I would necessar-

GREG: I don't know if I would necessarily say those four years at university studying computer engineering honestly helped me write better music; however, it's definitely given me the drive to pursue the "rock 'n' roll lifestyle." [Giggles] I learned the hard

way that I would much rather be touring the country with my three best. friends than stuck in a laboratory with a calculator and a pocket protector.

SKRATCH: What's a typical Friday night like when the band is hanging out not playing music—poker night, wild orgies, movie night?

GREG: Ummm...it's probably closest to the wild orgy thing. [Chuckles] Three of the four of us really enjoy the drink, which tends to lead to some pretty absurd situations. Let's leave it at that we can honestly say that we are the grossest people you will ever meet in your life. Ever.

PJ: It also depends a lot on whether we're on tour or not. If we're on tour, with a bottle of Southern Gentleman, we're basically worse than lanes mistaken for stars; however, if we're at home, we'll usually gather in New Brunswick at our friends Amelia, Kristin, and Ross' place and just get a bunch of friends and some food and drinks and hang out, tell wild stories of things we did on tour and just catch up with our builddies.

SKRATCH: What makes for the best environment to listen to an Outsmarting Simon release?

GREG: When you're bonin' a hot chick. PJ: Greg's doing his best to be a jackass. He's actually a really nice guy. Honestly. Seriously, though, since our first record didn't come out as heavy as the songs are live, I think it lends itself really well to sitting alone with some headphones and just really taking it in. Some of our friends who enjoy illegal substances say that really enhances it. I wouldn't know. Since the new record is a lot more rock, maybe in the car with some buddies? I'm not really sure. The record is a very different thing to me than I'm sure it is to someone not in the band.

SKRATCH: Please talk about your political views with us—or are you all too shy for that?

GREG: I would say, as a whole, we're pretty damn liberal when it comes down to it—though I occasionally like to play devil's advocate simply for the purpose of creating discussion and debate.

PJ: For the most part, I am a humanist and a utilitarian. My political views all fall into line behind these ideals.

SKRATCH: I understand you guys just finished touring March 15th. How was the tour?

GREG: It was a pretty good tour. But to be honest, since we've been on tour since we finished recording the record in September, we don't really think of the tours as individual ones but more part of a long period of touring. But It was a name, we needed one, and now we have one. particularly fond of it—but who cares? "

overall, it was a good time. Some of the shows — a trailer for all of our equipment, so we're not too

SKRATCH: You guys traveled via van, right? How is that: all of you guys stuffed into one van and on the road with all your gear? Must have

upply of good music and video games, as well as library of geeky books to choose from. When it give each other space when it's needed. As a

Is

SKRATCH: What can fans expect to find on STAND UP STRAIGHT?

GREG: More mediocre songs performed by a and has better songwriting. We were a much slow jams and some up-tempo ones, and a whole lot of weird time signatures and delay (as we are

SKRATCH: Will you guys be touring after its release?

We hope to tour forever—or at

SKRATCH: I was looking at your merch page on your site earlier, and I noticed something very important missing: thongs. When are you guys going to have an Outsmarting Simon thong for sale? How much will it be? Will it be crotchless?

PJ: To be honest, you're the first to ask this, but if you'd really like, we can get on it. Are thongs big right now? I'm confused. Is this a joke?

SKRATCH: I just have one more question: Any plans to do the tour in the buff? I'm sure fans would love it!

PJ: As a whole, we're really not good-looking enough or in good enough shape to do that. Well, maybe Greg is, but I don't think you'd like to see us all nude. Anyway, thank you so much. We had a blast answering these, it's pretty rare that you're asked new, fun questions, so it's always interesting trying to figure out how to wrap your head around new queries. Be good everyone, and stay safe.



Detail on fig. 1 - HOT PINK "An all out assault on all the tender parts of our favor, the parts of us that like our rock 'n' roll to lie with us in big, hooky, synergetic, lump. It courts the very threads in us that need the excitement of something that sounds daring." -PUNK PLANET

Detail on fig. 2 - THE POLITICS OF DANCING "One of the 100 Bands You Need to Know in 2005" -ALTERNATIVE PRESS // "Dancable politically charged post punk... Remarkably high-energy, hip-shaking gems" -CMJ // "If I told you that I was going to start a band, and in that band 1/2 mix punk, hardcore, and jazz, you'd probably call me crazy, right? Well not only would I not be crazy, but I wouldn't be original either because SADAHARU has been doing it for a while now...

REFUSED meets FUGAZI meets DRIVE LIKE JEHU. Seriously, its that good" -AMP

Detail on fig. 3 - CHILDREN OF THE DEUCE The side-project of Travis Steever from COHEED AND CAMBRIA and members of THREE,

Detail on fig. 4 - YOUR BLOOD, MY HANDS... LET'S MAKE IT A DATE THE MEMORY deftly combine the song-writing prowess of TAKING BACK SUNDAY with the polished edginess of FINCH and the attitude of THE USED.





Fucked Up By Sarah Laidlaw

With a name like that Fucked Up, after a song by NOTA), a band has to bring some conviction and some good-old punk rebellion...and this Toronto-based band does exactly that. Their releases (mostly 7"s) are filled with sarcasm in the form of take credits and fake names, and most of their interviews are filled with exaggerations and jokes. Fucked Up's reasoning behind this is to motivate their fans to truly engage in their music, initiating thought and dedication. Their name also does not mislead in representing their music, with its early punk/hardcore influences (such as Black Flag and The Germs), although they do add in their own unique ideas with saxophone, whistling, and hand-clapping.

Mike Haliechuk (guitar) took the time to speak with me...but be careful not to take him too seriously.

SKRATCH: What made you leave your other bands to start Fucked Up, and when did that happen?

MIKE: The people I was playing with at the time found out that I was trying to start this other band that I'd be using all my songs in, and they kicked me out. It was sort of like an infidelity thing. Beat's parents are really insane musicians. He was only 15 when he joined the band. Anyhow, they told him he could only be in one band at a time because they wanted him to focus everything in some sort of weird musicianship way, so he picked us. He plays in Career Suicide also now, but his parents don't know he's in more than one band. We started the band in 1996 but didn't put any records out or do much work for a long, long time.

SKRATCH: Do you have an overall message in your music?

MIKE: Yeah: we want people to become better people by listening to us and by being into our band. A lot of people have Fucked Up tattoos. Our message is that we want people to be really devoted to us as a band and as people. We talk about this in the last 12" we did, LOOKING FOR GOLD. We want people to fuck off from all the stupid shit they do in their lives to focus on being into our band, getting branded, doing a lot of acid and ayahuasca while listening to our records, committing crimes, breaking off from most of their relationships, eating garbage, and spending a lot of time trying to figure out what the hidden messages are in our lyrics and artwork.

SKRATCH: What is your favorite thing to sing about, and why?
MIKE: We like to sing about mind control, because we

MIKE: We like to sing about mind control, because we think it's really sneaky. We have another band that we mostly write songs about hockey and sports in, but we'd never use lyries like that in Fucked Up.

SKRATE LE How did you first get interested in music?
MIKE: My hom made me take piano lessons when I was a kid, and I get really good and did a lot of traveling for recitals and played on a lot of CDs as part of larger symphonics. Anyhow, I was young, but

olaying an instrument
was really fun, and I
decided that when
I was the right age
I'd form a punk
band and do the
same thing.

SKRATCH: What does playing music do for you?
MIKE: Pays my rent.

SKRATCH: You have some different concepts in your music, such as saxophone, clapping, and whistling. Where did these ideas come from?

MIKE: We have a guy that we don't really talk about a lot. He gives us a lot of our ideas from behind the scenes. He's into lots of weird shit and tells us to put this crazy stuff into our music and records. [...]

SKRATCH: How do playing shows in Canada compare to playing shows in the U.S.?

MIKE: No one really knows us in Canada, but in the States we play to hundreds of people most places we go, and the people seem to be a lot more devoted to the band. Also, no one really skateboards at our shows in Canada, but tons do in the States.

SKRATCH: What could I expect from you if I were to attend one of your shows?

MIKE: Probably a lot of violence, a lot of drug abuse, a lot of sieg-heiling (for reasons we don't really understand), a lot of people swarming our merch table, a lot of arguing [amongst the band], and tons of weird old men clamoring around the shows.

SKRATCH: What's the road like for you guys? What do you tour in, where do you eat, where do you sleep, do you all get a long, etc.?

MIKE: Sarah, this is a really weird question. We always tour in this converted school bus we stole from Camp's grade school. It's really roomy, but we always manage to pack it with so many people when we go on tour that it gets really cramped and frustrating. Also, we often pick people up in it along the road or from shows and shit. We mostly eat at restaurants that promoters take us to after the gigs—nice places and shit. We are sort of picky about shit that we're going to eat on the road: no McDonald's or anything like that. I mean, we cat a lot of shit off our riders, which are mostly

WE ALWAYS TOUR IN
THIS CONVERTED SCHOOL
BUS WE STOLE FROM
CAMP'S GRADE SCHOOL.
IT'S REALLY ROOMY...

just requests for food rather than, like, women or towels or anything. But yeah, we eat at nice places—or why go on tour, you know? We sleep in motels and sometimes in the van; and we NEVER get along. Mostly all we do in the bus is fight and argue about shit. It really sucks, and people have left tours because of it a few times.

SKRATCH: What do you need to accomplish with Fucked Up in order to feel like you were successful?

MIKE: We need to put out two incredible LPs that we are working on. We need to have lots of people ruin their lives because of the band, have lots of people get injured at our shows, know that most of our sigils that we cast for the band worked...but we know that is already happening.

SKRATCH: Is that goal the basic plan? What else is in Fucked Up's future?

MIKE: Yeah, that's the plan: get hooked up with some sick

MIKE: Yeah, that's the plan: get hooked up with some sick package tours; play shows in Korea, Israel, Palestine, and Moscow; and release some killer tunes on records, you know?

SKRATCH: Is there anything I missed that SKRATCH readers need to know about you guys?

MIKE: We love skatchoarding.

 Learn more truths and untruths about Fucked Up at www.derangedrecords.com.

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EMBRACE THE END By Janelle Jones

Embrace the End play intensely crushing metal/hardcore, so when three of the fellowsævocalists Jesse and Pat and drummer Bartæcalled while on a bike trail one spring eve, I was a bit taken aback. Turns out these dudes from "ethnically diverse and aquatic" Sacramento are not as serious as their feral music might make them seem. Here, a bit about the band (also featuring bassist Louie and guitarists Joel and Kyle) and their debut LP, COUNTING HALL-WAYS TO THE LEFT (Abacus).

SKRATCH: I won't dwell on it because you probably don't even wanna talk about it, but I was just wondering if you find any pros and/or cons to having members in other bands and by being referred to as "Embrace the End, featuring members of..."—because I can see that as being negative, in that you wanna be your own band, but also as being positive, because if kids are into the other bands, they'll check this out faster.

JESSE: It's definitely bad sharing time with all the other bands [namely, Killing the Dream and First Blood]. We have to schedule all the shows and tours with each other. But we've generally worked out e-mails going back and forth all the time. [...]

BART: I would say it's kinda weird for me because I play guitar for KTD, as well, and that band started three years after ETE started, so in a way I'm really happy for both bands. It just took ETE longer to

come into our own style and be happy with what we're actually doing. So as far as the time frame for both bands, I'd say that's kind of a con, watching one band get a lot of recognition early on and having one that works really hard and takes a while longer to get some recognition or just get a good record out.

SKRATCH: When did ETE get together?

BART: We've been around for a while. We've had a few line-up changes.

PAT: Actually, it's basically a completely different band [now]. BART: The only original member's

Joel.
PAT: Basically, this version's been

around for probably three years.

SKRATCH: So you've had these songs for a long time? BART: A couple we've had for

maybe a year. PAT: Yeah, one of them.

BART: Joel really started kinda busting our ass a lot three months before recording, and [we] just wrote and rewrote some of the songs and made them work better, so I'd say most of the record's pretty new; but there's a couple songs we've had for a while.

JESSE: Yeah, there definitely was songwriting in the studio [at the] last minute, but it turned out okay. PAT: "After Me the Floods" is actually a song we had on a 7" in 2003, and we re-recorded [it] 'cause we wanted to do it justice. Our last recording really was bad for that song. That's the oldest song we have on the record.

SKRATCH: You said it took longer for ETE to come into its own, but when you guys first formedæwell, not all you were in itæbut was the direction you wanted to go in pretty much known?

JESSE: I would say it evolved drastically.

PAT: Yeah, we've evolved over the past couple years just because we knew kinda what we liked and what we wanted to do. But it took a while.

BART: I wasn't very good at drums when I first started ETE, and we just all pushed each other until we were semi-satisfied with where we were. That's where we are now.

JESSE: I think a year or two ago I didn't anticipate the record sounding the way it does. But I'm happy with it, for the most part.

SKRATCH: For the most part? JESSE: Yeah. There's always a couple of things....

PAT: I don't think any artist is completely satisfied with what they do. BART: Basically, we're already looking forward to working on a new record.

SKRATCH: Yeah, "own worst critic." I understand. But what do you have to say about the album?

BART: First of all, I just hope that we don't get just associated with generic metal-core (because of the name of the band or whatever). I hope people dig beneath the surface and see what our record's real-training the short.

JESSE: I think the record has a lot that normal metal-core doesn't. [Laughs] I'm not trying to talk us up, but yeah. We stuck with [our

name] 'cause we picked it five years

BART: We have a lot of parts I think people consider death or grind or thrash or whatever, and then there's also some melodic sections. And we didn't wanna do the cheesy jump to the singing. [...] PAT: Basically, we don't have any clean singing in it. We wanted to keep it pretty brutal.

SKRATCH: Right. I was gonna mention that, 'cause I like that there isn't any.

BART: Pat has a voice like an angel. [Laughter] But we just decided it's beautiful without the glam vocals.

JESSE: We're gonna release the remix album and it's gonna be all glam vocals, though. Actually it's gonna be a black metal, and we're all gonna wear spandex. I'm gonna look like David Bowie in LABYRINTH. [Laughter]

SKRATCH: That might sell more records.

JESSE: Yeah, definitely.

SKRATCH: But the opener, "It Ate Everybody", that's pretty much a short burst. Pretty crazy. Is that why you wanted to put it first: to kinda kick people in the head?

PAT: Definitely. We also wanted to compensate for all the really long songs we have. One song is up in the seven-minute range. We wanted to do a short, fast one. It's just intense and really fun to play live.

SKRATCH: [...] Lyrically, is it all about Armageddon or something? I don't even know.

embrace the end



PAT: Hopefully it's pretty all over the place. [The album] doesn't have a specific theme; it's basically real-life issues that have affected me, Jesse, or Bart (all three of us have written lyrics for this record). And we have a lot of political innuendoes and things like that, but also some very personal stuff.

BART: My favorite song lyrically is "Carbombs and Conversations", because it's about [how] humans just take from the earth and pretty much destroy it without any remorse. Jesse wrote the lyrics. There's one line that says, "We drink the wine and piss in the well." That I really like.

JESSE: And most of us are vegan. BART: We're hippies.

JESSE: We're dirty, dirty hippies.

SKRATCH: Do you consider yourself a political band?

PAT: I'd say we're a real band. We're not necessarily political, but we have a social consciencesomething lacking in the genre these days. [The genre] is kinda becoming more commercial. When I first got into hardcore and metalcore, it was bands like Earth Crisis and Altar and things like that that were really political and really militant and inspiring. I think that's lacking [now], and I wanna put at least a little of that into what I'm doing, because [when you're] in a band, people listen to you. You have a podium. But it's not our main focus.

JESSE: We definitely wanna try to keep the heartbreak songs to a minimum. There are two. One's really old. We try to steer clear of singing about girls.

PAT: And both of those [songs] are relatively vague, as far as the heart-break situation goes.

SKRATCH: Yeah, there's enough of them! So I'm guessing you'll have the lyrics in the album.

JESSE: Yes, there's a lot of lyrics in the booklet. I think it's 12 pages long.

PAT: We have written explanations about some of the lyrics, too.

SKRATCH: I have to ask about the meaning or purpose of "The Devil Rides a Pale Horse", Is that just to break it up or something?

BART: We kinda wanted to make the album actually an album. We decided that [song] would tie things together. That track has samples from [the Book of] Revelations in it, so we named it a line out of Revelations.

JESSE: Underneath the sample that's on top, there's a bunch of voices that say things. You have to turn up the speakers really loud. It's all from Revelations. And I took it

from some apocalyptic book (or something like that) on tape about the Revelations. SKRATCH: I didn't know if you guys were really serious or something [by the sound of your style], but I went to your Myspace page and saw that you have a sense of humor too. BART: [Laughter] Yeah, we're definitely not very serious most of the time.

JESSE: We're definitely silly dudes.

SKRATCH: I got that a little [Laughter] just from talking to you.

PAT: We're doing this interview on the side of a bike trail,

JESSE: ...In a huddle. And the back wheel of my bike is about to fall off.

PAT: Yeah, it is. [Laughter] But fortunately, both me and Jesse work at a bike shop.

During the oddball discussion that ensued (they're misanthropic hippies?!), one (serious) quote arose that they wanted printed, and it's this sage advice from Pat: "Enjoy life, but at the same time [don't] be selfish." But then again, they could've just been utilizing their dry wit. www.embracetheendoftheworld.com

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Transistor Transistor By Mike SOS

When communicating with Transistor Transistor guitarist Brad Wallace via e-mail, we learned quite a bit about the New Hampshire-based rock band. How the band got its name, how they wound up on the quirky Level Plane label, and his thoughts on the state of indie touring in the States are just a few of the nuggets of information you'll get as you scroll down and peruse this interview.

SKRATCH: How did Transistor Transistor form? How did you guys come up with the name?

BRAD: Transistor Transistor formed because some dudes wanted to start a band. Said dudes eventually got a show and needed a name. Thus, the name "Transistor Transistor" was used on a flyer, and it stuck. I wish it was a better story than that, but that's the gist of it.

SKRATCH: What sets Transistor Transistor apart from other bands?

BRAD: This question is tough because it's hard to come off sounding modest, but with that said, I'd like to think that we're not a band that is easily pigeonholed into any one genre. We're not the most diverse band in the world, but as far as loud rock music goes, I think we put a lot more effort into writing songs that will keep people interested in the band throughout the length of a whole album, [as opposed to] writing a couple decent genre songs and then filling the rest of the album with songs that sound exactly the same. We're not interested in being the flavor of the month; we're far more interested in continually making good records down to every last detail and having some longevity.

SKRATCH: Tell us how you guys wound up on Level Plane. How the relationship has been thus far?

BRAD: The band ended up on Level Plane because a friend suggested that we send in a demo. Greg liked it, and soon after that Transistor and Greg's band Hot Cross played a show together. Greg then asked the band to do a record, which ended up being the first EP. Ever since, the relationship has been fantastic, especially since we started the process of creating ERASE ALL NAME AND LIKE-NESS. The amount of support and access to resources that Level Plane has given us in creating this album is more than one could ask for a band that had only done a few EPs prior to this. Greg put a lot of faith is us and gave us the opportunity to the make the best record we possibly could. I think this was beneficial, as it gave the band a reason to work the much harder. Knowing that someone was that supportive and willing to put a lot on the line for us motivated us to work as hard as we could and try and really take things to a new level. We wanted to do that for ourselves anyway, but when someone is working that hard for you, it's just that to its 13-minute length and that we

much more of a reason to work hard for them. I'd like to think that Greg gave us an opportunity-and almost even a challenge-to make the best record we could at this time; and that we

worked hard to do that.

SKRATCH: Describe the process of recording ERASE ALL NAMES AND LIKENESS. Where did you guys record and with who? Any funny recording stories you'd like to share? BRAD: We recorded the record with Kurt Ballou at his studio God City. I can't think of any specific funny stories right now regarding that session, but I do remember that recording the record was some of the most fun I've ever had. We worked hard for the better part of a year writing the songs, so every day it was very exciting hearing that hard work come to fruition. The whole experience was great, and I think Kurt did a great job both in creating a good atmosphere in which to work and in delivering a quality finished product. Whenever it comes time to make a new record, I'm sure we'll be looking to return to God City.

SKRATCH: Which song was the easiest to record? Hardest? The one you feel came out the best?

BRAD: I don't recall any of the songs being particularly hard to record, probably because we were pretty well-rehearsed. I think James had a hard time with some of the drum tracks occasionally, but only because he would work really hard and redo a whole track just to make sure he really nailed a fill or made sure the tempo was absolutely what he wanted. "Sweet William" may have been the easiest, since it's so short; and I suppose "A sinking ship full of optimist" was a little more difficult due

brought in a friend to play upright ten to in the

SKRATCH: How has growing up on New Hampshire shaped your music? BRAD: I grew up in Alabama, so it really hasn't affected me at allalthough I was raised to hate and loathe the state of New Hampshire and all that it stands for. This anger underlies all my motivations to make loud and angst-ridden music. Fuck New Hampshire.

SKRATCH: How does a Transistor Transistor song get written?

BRAD: Usually someone will just show up to practice with a riff or two or just a single idea. We play around with it a little bit see what's good about it, see what other people are thinking, and basically just jam it out until it's a song. Most of the time the majority of the song is just come up with at practice and is just a reaction to the first idea placed on the table. Nat and I are primarily the ones bringing in the initial ideas, but more or less everyone takes part in the process of creating the song.

SKRATCH: Who are some of your musical influences? Any we wouldn't be able to pick up on by listening to you?

BRAD: Well, it's probably pretty obvious that we enjoy the guitar stylings of John Reis, but it really doesn't stop there. We all listen to a wide variety of things that influence us, whether it be Nirvana, T. Rex, Interpol. or Emperor, Realistically, most of the time we are listening to music that has very little Transistor Transistor, I'm..."? to do with the music we are playing. think people would be surprised at the amount of metal and prog we lis- three months of touring yesterday,

van, considering the music that we play.

SKRATCH: Where is your favorite place to play, and why?

Books Cafe BRAD: All Summerville, SC, used to be a great place to play, mostly because the shows were always well run and the crowd would just go absolutely apeshit when we would play. I also really like the R5 Church shows in Philly. This place K4 in Nuremburg, Germany, we've played twice now, and it's absolutely outstanding. Basically, anywhere that there is a good sound, an enthusiastic audience, and the show is well organized and well run is a great place to play

SKRATCH: How would you explain your music to someone who never heard you before?

BRAD: I usually just say "loud rock music," because if you say any more than that people start to think you sound exactly like some other band or some specific band, and I'm not interested in that. It's a really hard question to answer, and I generally think that the best answer we can give is that we recorded the music, and if you want to know what we sound like, then become an active participant and listen to the songs and decide for yourself.

SKRATCH: "When I'm not in

BRAD: When I'm not in Transistor, I'm still in Transistor. We just finished

the band. We've been really busy though, I'm pretty broke and it's time to find a new job.

studio or a gig, and why?

BRAD: Apples and oranges. Sometimes I think I feel happiest when we com-

plete a new

morning doing an interview for something that excites me greatly. practices, why not wait till at least guys like to tour with that you Hearing your song on playback in a year before you start seriously lately, so there hasn't been time the studio as it's coming together for much else. I used to be a is a great feeling. Equally, though, improve greatly after the first year mental-health counselor, but I we love playing live. Not much of being a band. Taking the time to quit that to put more time into can compare to laying down a do something right will always be ence. I think part of being in a quantity. band means having a love for both. Your live show and your SKRATCH: Do you prefer the recorded material are the main ways you represent yourself, so it's really for the best to be passionate about both forums for your music.

you give to aspiring musicians?

today, and most of in a band is really fun, but it's also work.

work is really a lot of the fun. mistakes. There are so many ing harder to not just start a is really that you should be nothing worse than that. patient. Take the time to let your music develop. Instead of

trying to play out. Most bands

SKRATCH: What are the best and worst parts about touring?

BRAD: The best part of touring is that when things are going well and you play a great show with great people. You rarely feel better SKRATCH: What advice would than that exact moment, because it's the success of lot of hard work. BRAD: Work your ass off. There The worst part about touring is are like 2 billion that it still occurs in this country bands out there where you can drive 10 hours to play a show and find out that the them suck. Being asshole who booked it clearly didn't flyer for the show but only posted it on the Internet for a few of his friends and that the PA is a bass combo amp that is complete-After a while, though, it's ly inaudible. Then he only gives easy to see that the hard you 20 bucks for the show, even though you spent 90 in gas-and It's tough, though. Some things he doesn't have place for you to you can only learn from making stay. So, basically, what I'm saying is that there are still some people fucking bands out there. I'd out there who are completely really like to see people work- incompetent when it comes to setting up a show. When you're 2000 band that sounds like their miles from home and in the midfavorite band. The best advice dle of a six-week tour, there is

and here I am early on Monday song. The recording process is playing your first show after eight SKRATCH: Whom would you haven't yet?

BRAD: I'd kill my first born to open up for Hot Snakes, but that's clearly just a beautiful dream. I'd like to tour with Panthers because the band. After all this touring, great set in front of a great audi- more impressive. Quality over they're friends of mine who I don't get to see often enough and a great band. We only toured with The Holy Shroud for about a week, and I'd really like to tour with them some more. I suppose some other wishlist-type bands would be Converge, Fugazi, and Les Savy

> SKRATCH: What can we expect from Transistor Transistor for the rest of 2005?

> BRAD: Probably just another U.S. tour sometime in the fall, and maybe we'll head up into Canada. Basically, we just want people to hear the new record we made, because we are really proud of itand touring seems to be the best way to do that.

> SKRATCH: Any final words for the fans?

> BRAD: I'd just like to thank everyone who came out to shows on these last two tours and made them positive experiences; and anybody who helped out the band. We'll be touring some more so we hope to see you when we come to your town. Check www.transistortransistor.com for updates. Thanks for the interview.

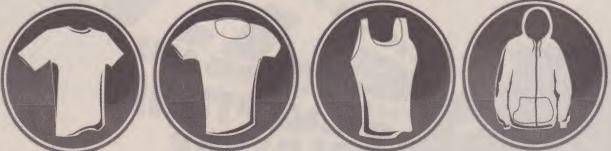


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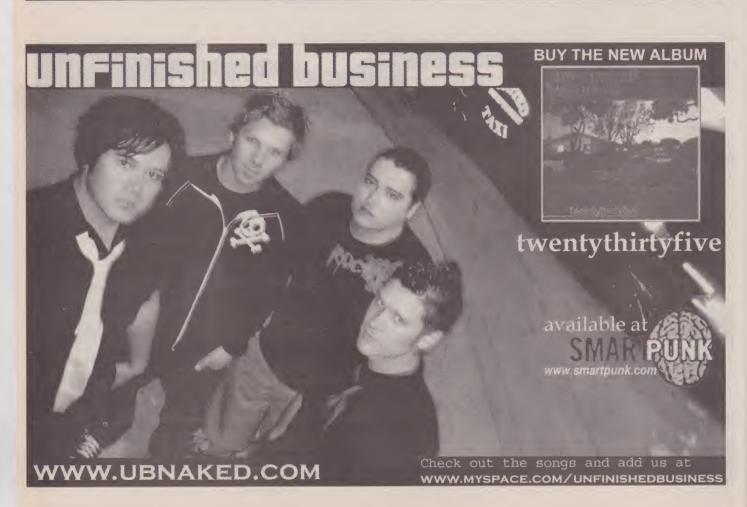
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NEW FOUND GLORY
April 21, 2005 @ the House of
Blues, (Anaheim, CA)
By Tim and Todd Markel

Eisley had already played by the time I gained admittance. I assumed a position stage right and near the bar on the lower level just as the lights were dimming for Reggie and the Full Effect. The curtains opened to reveal the band dressed up in big, white bunny outfits. Before they even played a note, I was expecting a funny, poppy, catchy, melodic set from the Kansas City-based band. To my surprise, they played a really hardcore-influenced set with lots of screaming (just the way I like it). The audience seemed to be made up of lots of Reggie fans, and a good portion of the audience was singing every lyric to songs such as 'What the Hell is Stipulation" or "What the Hell Is Contempt". At one point James Dewees told the audience the next would be the last real song, and the band took a short break for a costume change. They came back out on stage half-naked and covered in a brownish red blood-like substance. They played a headbanging cover of Slayer's "Rein in Blood" and introduced a member of Eisley (also covered in blood), who would end up helping them out on the last song, "Dwarf Invasion", which was another hardcore-influenced number that left me battered and bruised by the end of the set. Their latest CD is entitled SONGS NOT TO GET MAR-RIED TO. I recommend you buy it and then see Reggie and the Full Effect live to get the fuil effect. After this set, Dewees just had to move his keyboard a little to the right for his gig with New Found Glory.

I had already seen New Found Glory a number times this past year, so I wasn't exactly jumping up and down about seeing them again. The curtain opened and the band immediately went into the first song, "Understatement" (off of 2002's CD STICKS AND STONES). The band was very animated and kept a good rapport with the audience. Bass

player lan didn't hesitate to come out in all his giory-i.e., shirtless, as usual. Lead singer Jordan Pundik was more or less right up against the barricade the entire night sharing the microphone with audience members to sing along with him. This tour was being called the "Back to Basics Tour," and the set was a pretty even split of old songs, new songs, and harder songs, and most all of the singles were played. Joe Escalante (of Kung Fu Records and The Vandals fame) came out and helped the boys by playing bass on one song. I'd have to say that New Found Glory used to be one of my favorite bands, but when the band started playing a lot of songs that I just wasn't familiar with I, it didn't take too much convincing to get me to leave a little early. Call me jaded or just bored. Their latest CD is called CATALYST...and this is pretty



HOUSE OF FOOLS
FACING NEW YORK
STEEL TRAIN
RX BANDITS
April 21, 2005 @ Chain Reaction
(Anaheim, CA)
By Todd Markel

Anaheim's Chain Reaction was House of Fools from Greensboro, NC. Their songs rely heavily on grand plano, acoustic guitars, and catchy retro meiodies. Their bio says that they are

"music for your ears"; I'd say they have a sound that's pretty unique in today's musical environment. The influences of The Beatles and Electric Light Orchestra are very obvious, and I decided that I would have once of their cas at the end of the show. Unfortunately, I was told at the merchandise booth that they didn't have a CD out yet but that they would really appreciate it if I bought a T-shirt. Sorry, guys, I have enough black T-shirts. Most of their songs have strange names that all seem to be in pig Latin, such as "Ixnay on the Egday", "Rubber Deggy", or "Parking Deg". I really like one of their songs, "Deggie Style". House of Fools doesn't have a "proper Website" yet, but you can find them on www.purevolume.com and (of course) at www.myspace.com. I, for one, am looking forward to their return to Orange County and more good, original music from House of Fools.

The next band to grace the stage was from the Bay Area, Facing New York. They describe themselves as "Rhodes-heavy punk-prog art pop that channels Led Zeppelin, The Police, and The Dismemberment Plan." That's really a lofty ambition, but Facing New York does live up to it. They have some heavy jams and a sound that's reminiscent of early '70s Bay Area rock. Look for them to put out a new CD some time this August, but in the meantime check out a song called "Paper Shepherd" on www.myspace.com.

New York City's Steel Train is another band that is a throwback to an earlier era. They combine elements of county, pop, and jam band and make it very exciting. They started their set with the second song on their new CD, "Road Song", with most of the band gathered around a single microphone centerstage and a lot of the audience singing along. This band shows their versatility by playing melodic acoustic ballads one moment and hot, ripping jams the next. Steel Train's new CD is called TWILIGHT TALES FROM THE PRAIRIES OF THE SUN. It's out on Drive-Thru Records and is really unlike anything else out on the labei. A highlight of the show for me was the Santana-inspired "The Lee Baby Slmms Show Episode 1". I was almost expecting it to work into "Black Magic Woman" at any moment. Another high point was their jamming cover of The Jackson 5's "I Want You Back". Altogether, an incredible set that had me running out buying their new CD two days later (i.e., on its release date).





The stage was all set, the fans were ready...but where are RX Bandits? Finally, after a long delay, Matt Embre comes out and tells the crowd that their drummer, Chris Tsagakis, is real sick with food poisoning and that they are expecting a phone call any moment telling them whether or not he will be able to play. In the meantime, Matt will play a few songs acoustically, as long as we don't mind hearing them again later. After some more delays (direct boxes can be a pain), he grabs his electric guitar and introduces the first song off the original 1969 Woodstock album, Richie Havens's "Freedom", switching back to his acoustic guitar about halfway in. Matt gave a shout out to his dad, who was in the audience, saying that it was he who that taught him to play guitar. It turned out that Chris was too sick to play, so Matt Fazzi, the guitarist from Facing New York, agreed to fill in on drums. Uh-oh, this could be a disaster. But after the first song, they all let out a big "hell yeah!" and give high fives all around. Matt does an amazing job, seems familiar with the material, and with just the occasional look and nod from the rest of the band, he does fine. After a few more songs, RX Bandits' bass player Joe Troy steps to the mic to announce that this is the most amazing thing he's every seen. The heat in the pit and the intensity of the show kept building...until I had to make my exit. I've been a fan of the RX Bandits since they were all still in high school and called The Pharmaceutical Bandits playing shows at Old World in Huntington Beach or the old Mesa Theater in Costa Mesa. They've come along way, as has their music. Their latest CD is called THE RESIGNATION and is out on Drive-Thru Records.















Agnostic Front
No Innocent Victim
All Shall Perish
Death Before Dishonor
May 3, 2005 @ El Rey Theatre (Los Angeles, CA)
Text and Photos by Richie Wu

Theatre by New York-based hardcore group Agnostic Front was overwhelming in intensity. Three other groups played in support of Agnostic Front: Death Before Dishonor, All Shall Perish, and No Innocent Victim. All were hardcore bands, all violently good, which made for an incredible night. The only problem was that the El Rey seemed a little too big for Agnostic Front to play. Let's be honest: the place was empty. Agnostic Front would have been much better fit playing the Roxy or another venue of that capacity. Regardless, the show was awesome. While I was there, I noticed H20 frontman Toby Morse and Evan Seinfeld from Biohazard fame cruising around the theatre.

Fresh off of a nearly fatal vehicle mishap from the night before, Death Before Dishonor took the stage first. Lead singer Bryan Harris encouraged the audience to come up to the front. I'm sure the band love to play regardless of how many people are at the show, but I'm sure it would have been nice if more people had shown up earlier. Death Before Dishonor has been on the road with Agnostic Front for three months playing in support of the their new album, FRIENDS,

FAMILY, FOREVER. The band was a riveting force to be reckoned with...but the lack people, not to mention the mishaps with the stage lighting, did not make for a great show.

Agnostic Front labelmates All Shall Perish were second on the bill. Hailing from Oakland, they were everything a hardcore band should be: full of fierce aggression. Again, hardly anyone was in the venue when they went on stage, so it didn't make for the best show one could see. However, by the time they went on, the lighting guys figured



out how to work the stage lights, so that was a plus. The two songs I dug the most were "Deconstruction" and "Laid to Rest". All Shall Perish played a 30–minute set that never slowed down. Hopefully I'll get to see them play to full house next time they're in Los Angeles.

Christian band No Innocent Victim took the third slot. Now, if you're into that whole "Christian movement" type of thing, then rock on with your bad self! But really, they were like the equivalent of Stryper, just hardcore style. When singer Jason Moody made some "Christian"-like comments from the stage, the moshing stopped and a look of confusion came over many people's faces. People seemed to ask themselves, "Why is this guy talking about the 'Christian way'?" I wasn't into the whole "music with a mes– sage" thing, either, but to their credit, they were extremely heavy, extremely hardcore. And Agnostic Front seems to like them, so that counts for something.

By the time they started playing, the crowd did seem to be considerably bigger—but it was still not at capacity by any means, but I was ready to experience the incredible power that is Agnostic Front. The thing that I like about them the most is that even though they're brutally hardcore, they seem to be more about groove and less about hardcore. Some of these other bands tend to be hardcore just for the sake of being hardcore. With Agnostic Front, even though their tunes are incredibly bone-crushing, you can still tap your foot to the music and sing some of the "larger than life" hooks that make up the choruses. These other bands do not have hooks or any type of melody at all. The band was incredibly tight and ferociously intense—so intense that I could see the veins bulging out the side of singer Roger Miret's neck. They must have played an hour, but it seemed like five minutes. "Peace" had to have been my favorite song. Regardless, was there, and I'm incredibly pleased that I was able to witness the New York hardcore

legends knock down the El Rey.

Agnostic Front's Another Voice Tour (which is in support of the group's new album of the same name) has been pillaging through the States since the middle of April and will continue to annihilate venues until June. Then, a month after that, the Age of Violence South American tour begins with Hatebreed, which will prove to be crushing as well!



MANIC HISPANIC

Manic Hispanic The Johns The Wrecking Crew May 4, 2005 @ the Casbah (San Diego, CA) Text and Photos by Richie Wu

AGNOSTIC FRONT

ALL SHALL PERISH

he long trek down to San Diego from O.C. to check out Manic Hispanic at the Casbah proved to be a worthwhile trip. I had never scene Manic Hispanic before. I know what you're thinking: "What, you've never seen Manic Hispanic?" I mean, come on: Gabby from The Cadillac Tramps, O.C. quasi-celebrity Steve Soto from The Adolescents and Agent Orange playing guitar, for this show they even have Randy Bradbury from Pennywise playing bass.... What have I been doing with my life that's so important that I couldn't get out to some Manic Hispanic shows? Believe me, I ask myself the same question over and over again!

When the Wrecking Crew came on, there were hardly any heads in the venue. Rocking some old-school punk, it was amazing that everyone in the band was under 20 years of age. I don't think they were even allowed in the club after their performance. I was into the band, they had a lot to offer musically. They had screaming leads, guitar parts played in harmony, catchy hooks, and a chick bass player, to boot! They really had it together for a bunch of high-school kids. I mean, they've even played shows with The Adolescents. However, I did take issue with the lingerie item that singer Cameron Kline was wearing. What's that about? It looked a little gay to me but what do I know?

The Johns (which my friend Tommy sings for) put on a great show!











CREW

them to be an opener on this club tour. The Johns delivered 30 minutes of straightahead, old-school, Stoogesstyle rock. The 11-song setwhich included songs such as "Crack City" and "In Tune"— was a non–stop display of hooks and loud guitars. Tommy has always been such an entertaining frontman, and with his signature "Tommy Clap," it's hard to go wrong. Without a doubt, The Johns are a band worth checking out. However, they do not have a Website, and when I tried to check them out

myspace.com/TheJohns, I came up empty-handed. So, keep your eyes peeled in your local paper for more shows by The Johns, because that seems to be the only place you're going to be able to find out when they're playing next.

The Casbah immediately filled up once Manic Hispanic hit the stage. As one should know, Manic Hispanic takes a variety of punk-rock gems and turns them into a hilarious mix of barrio shenanigans and vatto bravado, which makes for truly entertaining night. From the crowd, it looked as if Manic Hispanic was a human wall no one would dare try to break through. All lined up in a row, Dickies and flannels flowing, tattoos blazing proudly, the group belted out punk-rock classics left and right with incredible force. Even though hardly a classic, "Ruby Soho" by Rancid was the third song in. Well, it was immediately turned into the hilarious "Rudy Cholo" and was probably one of my favorite songs of the night. Also played were Bad Religions' "Atomic Garden" translated into "Uncle Chato's Garden" and Stiff Little Fingers' "Barbed Wire Love" morphed into "Barrio Love". Soon, the moshing transpired, and the crowd became one big, gigantic pit. I'm sure this is status quo for a Manic Hispanic show. For 12 bucks, the people of San Diego definitely got their money's worth. Manic Hispanic was incredibly entertaining, and I can't wait to see them again!

The Dillinger Escape Plan
The Kinison
Heads Will Roll
Zombi

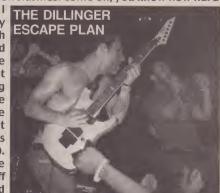
May 8, 2005 @ Chain Reaction, Anaheim , CA Text and Photos by Richie Wu

was running late when I set out to catch The Dillinger Escape Plan at Chain Reaction. Due to Mother's Day activities, I missed the first two bands: Heads Will Roll and Zombi. As I walked in, The Kinison were just about to play. Their sound was reminiscent of At the Drive-In, which I dig. Their abundance of sonic guitar riffs, firing off like precision machine guns, was plenty to get me going—not to mention the surplus of brain-burning screams and freakish melody lines, which left me numb for days. However, an unfortunate occurrence happened when I was trying to round up some information for my review: I pulled one of the band members aside to find out more about the group, and he wasn't receptive at all. I received no information whatsoever. I even told him where I was from and what I was doing. Still, my quest for information came up fruitless. He looked at me as though I was some strange form of paparazzi—which is highly bizarre, because most bands tend to give up too much information...and then some. Oh. well, I guess they didn't want the press, so enough about them.

Now, on to The Dillinger Escape Plan. I have to tell you that their performance was INSANE. One thing about Chain Reaction is that fresh air is hard to come by. It's called AIR CONDITIONING, which Chain Reaction knows nothing about. By the time The Dillinger Escape Plan went on, everyone was drenched in sweat, and the band suddenly pulverizes into their first tune. The crowd swayed back in forth violently from the front of the stage to the back of the building. It was a KICK-ASS show. The band seemed to be in fine form. Singer Greg Puciato paced the stage like an angry lunatic, which was pretty entertaining. And I have to mention guitar player Ben Weinman. This guy is really the "INSANE" one. Somewhere at the beginning of their set, he managed to get an appalling head wound that would not stop dripping blood. The blood oozed down the back of his head and covered his neck. Remarkably, he continued to play with violent aggression. Towards the end of their hour-long set, the blood had made its way down his chest and dripped off his guitar. By this time, I had decided to take a break and go get one of those delicious Chain Reaction slushies. Come on, you know how hard

they are to turn down! As I turned around from the slushy stand it, seemed as though Greg was dousing the crowd with water. I could not figure out why. Then he brought out some kind of flame-throwing apparatus, with which he began blowing flames into the crowd. People were digging it (although I was sure glad I was over by the slushy machine). My favorite tune had to have been "Sugar Coated Sour" off CALCULATING INFINITY and 'Sunshine the Werewolf' off

their latest, MISS MACHINE. They have a bunch of big shows lined up, which I would like to check out.



SPOON

May 11, 2005 @ Amoeba Records (Hollywood, CA)
Text and Photos by Jeff Lambert

Even if you're a staple in the indie rock scene or if you've enjoyed some mainstream success, you still need to promote each new record like it's the first one you've put out. This would explain why bands with years of experience are willing to play a free show or two in the name of self-promotion. When you think about it, is there a better way to get kids in a record store than to play for free at a hip music shop in Hollywood? From a booking perspective, it's a no-brainer. Tonight, Spoon takes over Amoeba Records in hopes of boosting sales for their new record, GIMME FICTION (Merge Records).



A 7 p.m. start time seems a little early for the headliner to go on, but when you're the lone act at the mercy of the record store, you don't have much choice. By the time we arrive, it's about five minutes before show time, and most of the crowd has already found their designated spot to stand. To our delight, the four-piece rock group from Texas arrives on stage within minutes of the estimated starting time. Indie hipsters of all ages crowd the aisles of the record store standing on their tiptoes in hopes of getting a glimpse of the tiny Amoeba stage. The stage is so small that those not in the front few aisles have trouble spotting the keyboardist flanked to the right. Singer/guitarist Britt Daniel stands confidently at center stage and opens the show with an unfamiliar tune off their new album. The vocals sound crisp, and drummer Jim Eno locks in with his mates from the opening note. Daniel keeps the band on a torrid pace, jumping from song to song, yet he finds time to crack a few jokes when the band take a quick breather.

These indie rock veterans easily replicate on stage the same sound quality and precision that makes their records a popular buy. While mostly comprised of songs from GIMME FICTION, the set list did save room for favorites like "Someone Something" and "The Way We Get



By" from prior releases. These familiar songs make good for comfort food, but the highlight of the show came with the performance of a new gem titled "Turn the Camera On". The track itself is unlike anything the band has done before, shining bright as the most original song Spoon has written to date. They close the 40-minute set by ripping through a classic rendition of "Jonathan Fisk", but not before reminding everyone to check out their latest release, GIMME FICTION.

The new songs sounded great, and Spoon did what they could to keep the listeners involved, but unfortunately most of the crowd stood around in a lifeless daze. Perhaps the layout of the venue is to blame for the lack of energy from the crowd. The warehouse-like feel of Amoeba scatters the audience around the giant store, which makes engaging the audience a dubious task. By and large, Spoon did an admirable job performing in a venue not meant for showcasing music but selling it—but wasn't that what this night was all about?

DINAH CANCER AND THE 45 GRAVE ROBBERS
THE VOIDS
DRAGSTRIP DEMONS
THRETNING VERSE
COMPLETE CONTROL
May 13, 2005, @ Showcase Theatre (Corona, CA)
Text and Photos by
Marcus Solomon

Horror rock jams! This is death rock, which is not to be confused with the overly pretentious world of goth. Goth is fine, and the women are often a very erotate is sight, but goth fans too often forget that the music should be the primary focus, not clothes, fashionable depression, or whatever. That shit sucks. This shit jams! Dinah Cancer and the 45 Grave Robbers is a somewhat convoluted name, but the music and vocals are straightforward, effulgent, and deliciously evil— evil like a haunted house, Frankenstein's monster, and Halloween. Dinah an co. is a good band, but this current assemblage blows the seal right off the crypt! With Rikk Agnew (former Adolescents and Christian Death) on lead guitar, it was a truly an auditory slice of heaven and heli.

Complete Control had already played, and Thretning Verse was already onstage doing its thing. The venue was surprisingly full for being so early in the evening. Kids with big mohawks and weird haircuts of every description lined the stage, while a steady vortex of swirling pit participants churned away. The music of T.V. is hard, fast, and very much rooted in the old-school, L.A. brand of punk execution. The sound is nothing new, but it's still something great. Three-chord power madness with the intermittent, brief, and shrill guitar solo and a rapidly pulsating deep bass on top of double-time drums. All of this is capped off with abrasive, in-your-face vocals from a short, tattooed Latino chick with a crewcut. (Damn, I forgot her name again.) The band now has a jamming single called TIME FOR WAR available from Puke 'N' Vomit Records.

Dragstrip Demons had some trouble getting off the starting line. The band had not yet arrived when it was time to begin its set. The extended break between bands did not seem to bother anyone. The Voids eventually came forward to get things rolling again.

Now the all-ages venue was really packed with anxious-looking young punkers eagerly awaiting one of Showcase's favorite bands. I stood onstage next to Mike (former drummer of The Voids) discussing with him the finer points of the current drummer's ability. "Cheeseburger" plays bass for Thretning Verse, pounds the tubs for The Voids, and does a damn fine job. The first song was a shredding new tune called "Money and Music" (possibly inspired by the band getting burned by the now-defunct Black Noise Records). Next was an old favorite named "I Don't Want to". The energy level kept rising at a rapid and steady level until the stage and immediate vicinity was a swirling froth of kids flying through the air, slamming in circles, yelling the vocals in unison, with everyone was drenched in sweat, sprayed water, or any number of suspiciously-scented fluids. The captivating Ms. Adri belted out each song to the aural/visual enjoy-

ment of everyone, especially the horny, young male fans whose eyes always seemed to gravitate to her shaking butt. At one time, the entire stage was saturated with dancing fans, and a fight erupted between one of the Showcase crew and a disgruntled fan. Mike came to the flying rescue by making a running tackle that sent both sailing from the stage and onto the floor. It only served to add to the excitement. The final song was the ever-popular "L.A.P.D.", but there was no encore.

Dragstrip Demons finally showed up and got to play a very short set of four songs. I did not care for the sound. Perhaps it was the hasty set-up, but this popular psychobilly ensemble just sounded like a cacophonous car wreck.

DINAH CANCER AND THE 45 GRAVE ROBBERS

"Welcome to Hell!" Shrieked Ms. Dinah Cancer, and the Friday the 13th celebration had officially begun. It was so fucking intense as Rikk Agnew brought his banged-up sunburst Les Paul screaming to life. Hai Satan punched out a tremendously demonic tempo, as ghosts, ghouls, and other flends emanated from the music, our minds, and all the parallel dimensions of infinity. The set list included "Insurance", "The Plan", "Bad Love", "Dream Hits", "Concerned Citizen", "45 Grave", "Partytime", and "Possession". Everyone in this band is a great musician, but if you really want to get "Fucked by the Devil", then be sure to enjoy the band while Mr. Agnew is heading the guitar attack. His temporary inclusion brings the band to a higher level, and I honestly don't know how the band will fill his void once he moves on. See, kids? You don't need to fixate on your appearance to get devilishly into some other zone. Dinah and her troupe of terror are the experts in fun-fueled fright-core. I felt hypnotized as the lithe Ms. Cancer undulated, writhed, and hissed out bloody fantasies i never knew existed. As the joyfully sinister evening drew to a close, Rikk seemed to shoot his wad a bit early. He drove himself into a frenzy during "Possession", threw down his instrument, and refused to come back to complete the set with one more song. The encore consisted of the wonderfully wicked "Evil". The song ended with Dinah's trademark extended hiss, and we were once again released from the sanctuary of the gig to the terror of ordinary society.



Apparently, there was a band called Mates of State that opened the show. I arrived about 8 p.m., and unfortunately Mates of State had just left the stage. I hadn't heard anything about them—or even known that they were on the bill! However, I'm sure they were fabulous.

When Taking Back Sunday hit the stage, the arena was almost at full capacity. I really like Taking Back Sunday and they complemented Jimmy Eat World well. They seem to be really blowing up right now. I think it's safe to say that if you listen to the radio, you've heard their songs. "A Decade Under the Influence" and "This Photograph Is Proof (I Know You Know)" are great and big hits right now. These songs, along with many others off their new album, WHERE YOU WANT TO BE, were all played at the show. I thought guitar player Fred Mascherino and singer Adam Lazzara did an excellent job of trading off on the vocal lines. It became apparent to me that trading off vocals, along with the alternative guitar riffing, is really what creates their distinctive sound. I thought their performance was awesome, and I look forward to seeing them in a smaller, more personable venue.

Jimmy Eat World started their set in an unusual way: the lights went down, and each member of the band came out one at a time. The show began with singer Jim Adkins coming out and singing by himself. Then he picked up his guitar, and the tension built. Slowly, bass player Mitch Porter, guitarist Tom Linton, and drummer Zach Lind appeared, one after the other. All of a sudden, the curtain flew back, and the band jumped into overdrive. The stage was creatively covered in televisions, which was very visually stimulating. Also, the backdrop used for this tour was a glistening city skyline that was lit up in neon blue. What can I say? Seeing Jimmy Eat World play my favorite tunes live just can't be beat! "Praise Chorus", "Get It Faster", "Bleed American", "Sweetness", and "The Middle" all just completely kicked ASS! The band also played "Pain" off their new record, FUTURES, which I really loved, as well! They even played "Seventeen" off STATIC PREVAILS! Even though they played over an hour, it seemed like five minutes to me. Believe me, I left Long Beach Arena completely satisfied! I plan on going to seem them again when they hit the road with Green Day. If you're a Jimmy Eat World fan, you should go see them when they come to your town. You'll thank me for it!

TAKING BACK SUNDAY



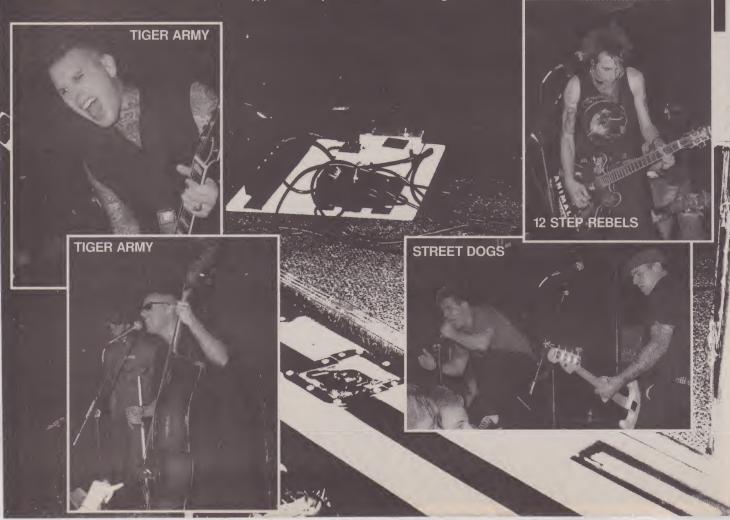
Tiger Army Street Dogs 12 Step Rebels May 16, 2005 @ SLO Brewing (San Luis Obispo, CA) Text and Photos by Richie Wu

As I entered SLO Brewing, I quickly found a secluded niche to squeeze into on the side of the stage, where I was able to enjoy the show and get some good pictures.

12 Step Rebels shook up Tiger Army fans with their lucid brand of psychobilly. These guys are nuts! With names like Jakob Insane, Hamburglar Nate, and Mad Dog Chad, one would automatically assume that they are capable of electrifying a club. And indeed they are, as everyone in the venue began to mosh, wail, and thrust as if they had just been let out on a day pass from the local insane asylum. Cool tunes, nice guys...in a demented sort of way. They complemented Tiger Army well. I was digging it. You should, too! You can find everything you need right here: www.12steprebels.com.

Boston band Street Dogs were second up. On tour with Tiger Army, they did not let anybody down. The only beef I have with them is this: What's up with all these lame band names? To me, "Street Dogs" is right up there with "Iron Skull", "Sledgehammer", and "Cobra", destined to go into the lame band name encyclopedia! Now that I have gotten that out of the way, I would like to tell you that despite their name, this is a band completely worthy of your time, and you should check them out immediately. With members from Dropkick Murphy's, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, and Roger Miret and the Disasters, Street Dogs did not let down a soul. At one point the band had to stop and recognize the punk-rock styling of a kid in the audience. Not more than 10 years old and armed with Black Flag patches on his ripped up Levi's jacket, he surfed the crowd until he reached the front of the stage, where he was welcomed by the band. Street Dogs let him rock out on stage for a couple of songs, declaring from the mic that this kid had to be the MOST PUNK ROCK in the building. The audience bellowed back with a huge roar. Armed with a bunch of guitar picks from the band, the kid flew off the stage and back into the open arms of waiting fans in the pit. The performance was fantastic, period. So, I guess Tiger Army (along with Bad Religion and Social D, who they also have been touring with) have overlooked the bad choice of band name to settle for an incredible show from Street Dogs. All pertinent information can be obtained at www.street-dogs.com.

Well, I, personally, think Tiger Army is ready for WORLD DOMINATION. Did anybody see those multiple nights they recently played at the House of Blues? Unbelievable. The San Luis Obispo show was equally good, if not better. SLO Brewing seemed a bit smaller than the House of Blues, creating a more personal setting. At points, the show got kind of crazy. Singer Nick 13 encouraged everybody to chant "fuck the world!" Over and over again, the people of San Luis Obispo complied, as the group fired into the tune of the same name. Oh, man, so many great songs—too many to actually name off. But if I HAVE to pick a couple, I would say that "Cupid's Victim", "Rose of the Devil's Garden", "Annabel Lee", and "Never Die" (the encore) were my favorites. The guys are touring now in support of their new album III: GHOST TIGERS RISE. If you want to see a killer show, I suggest you go see them. (And if you were one of the many who saw them at the House of Blues recently, you already know what I'm talking about.)



MELT BANANA DAS OATH

May 20, 2005 @ the Troubadour (West Hollywood, CA)
Text and photos by Jennifer Swann

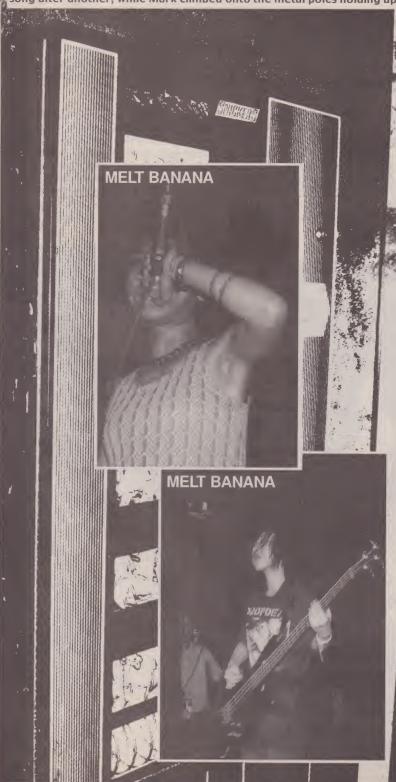
9:30 had rolled around as I was slouched down in the balcony of the Troubadour, bored, tired, and hungry, anxiously wondering why I had been sitting there for over an hour-and-a-half without even the slightest sight of a band or a musical instrument. Finally, just before the techno music that was blaring out of the speakers got too overly obnoxious for me to handle, the instruments slowly began to be set up on stage. Toxic Shock and The Flaming Tampons were scheduled to open the show that night, but my concern and confusion about why the show hadn't started until nearly 10 were cleared when I caught the news that Toxic Shock never showed up to play.

Once Das Oath took the stage, my mood had shifted and I wasn't tired anymore, wasn't bored anymore, and I had completely forgotten about my hunger. In fact, I was enthralled with the amount of energy and intensity these guys had. Lead singer Mark McCoy (ex-singer for Charles Bronson) had a voice so incredibly high and shrieking that it made me cringe and grab my own vocal chords in painful anguish. The drums were beaten furiously with an emphasis on the double-bass pedals. Mark went nuts, oftentimes plunging the microphone into the audience for kids to scream into and convulsively throwing himself into spastic tantrums. The band hammered out one high-speed song after another, while Mark climbed onto the metal poles holding up the lights and stabbed his way into the crowd, whole-heartedly

giving his soul to the music and the kids in the audience, his face drenched in a goopy sweat. Their set was very short, maybe 10 minutes...but if I did that much screaming, I'd be completely worn out after 10 minutes, too.

The drummer, bassist, and guitarist of Tokyo's infamous Melt Banana were the first to come onstage and start Jamming, before riveting lead singer Yasuko made her grand entrance halfway into the song. The screens behind the band displayed a light show of color-soaked kaleidoscopic images, while an insane buzzing, ringing, resonating racket exploded from the stage. Ecstasy to the senses. The entire audience jumped up and down and all over the place in this euphoric haze where everything was blurred and nothing mattered anymore. We were zombies on acid, driven only by noise and noise alone. Colored lights bounced as guitars screeched like chainsaws and blenders and car alarms and thunderstorms and telephone busy signals and glass shattering. The sounds that a spaceship might make just as it abducts a human were similar to the chaotic clamor that filled our hearts that night.

After Melt Banana played at least 10 or 15 songs, they proceeded to play another 15 songs or so, none of which could have been over 15 seconds long. An ungodly amount of energy was released in the shortest amount of time possible, after each o which the crowd went wild. It was like freeze dance: start, stop start, stop; dance your brains out and jump as hard and as fas as you can in 10 seconds, let it all go, stop abruptly, then do i all over again. It was like heating up in a hot tub and then cannon-balling into an ice-cold pool again and again or puffing or a relaxing marijuana cigarette and then immediately snorting lines of cocaine. After their cover of a Devo song, Melt Banana burst into a robotic state of stagnant immobility, the bassist and guitarist seemingly frozen like wax figurines, while Yasuki inched her head forward into the crowd like a turtle, moving only her dark engaging pupils frantically from side to side faster and faster, like animatronics, as if her head were abou to explode. The amps rang eerily, and the crowd cheered as the band ruptured into yet another fit of ear-splitting madness This night could have gone on forever. I was drenched in beer sweat, and who knows what else, and my feet felt like the could have fallen off right then and there. After Meit Banan played their last song and exited the stage quietly, nobody i the crowd moved. It was like everyone completely expected a encore weren't moving until we got one. We just stood there like helpless, panting puppies eagerly awaiting their owner to bring over a leash to go on a walk. A few people started chant ing "Melt Banana! Melt Banana!" but the chants died out quick ly, as the band re-took the stage. "Okay," Yasuko called in bro ken English, "we play two more song." We all cheered, as thi bizarre, fantastic uproar seduced us once again. As the show ended, the thought of weaning ourselves off this addictiv noise seemed outrageous and unfair. Leaving the show, I hear a grown man exclaim to his friend, "Man, I wanna hear the music all night. I'm even gonna be dreaming about it."



Millencolin Boys Night Out A Thorn for Every Heart Roses Are Red May 20, 2005 @ Soma (San Diego, CA) Text and Photos by Richie Wu

rocked out to Roses Are Red like anyone would. This Rochester, NY, outfit played with a fulfilling blend of power and finesse that kept my fist swaying in the air. I particularly liked "Oceans" for its big hooks and catchy melodies. Check them out—you'll thank me: www.rosesareredmusic.com.

A Thorn for Every Heart served up a big cup of emo-rocker delight. Word! This local band (well, Chino Hills is a lot closer than Orebro, Sweden, where the fine lads of Millencolin hall from, that's for sure) delivered a bunch of great tunes and put on a pretty intense live show, to boot. It sucked that I could not take any pictures of the band (photo pass problems); BUT, I was pretty excited that, for once, I got the chance to just KICK IT and ENJOY THE SHOW.

I suddenly became perplexed when Boys Night Out finally took to the stage. I wasn't sure if I liked them or not. Right off the bat, the name Boys Night Out struck me as being a tad odd. Also, the "Tommy Lee" stick twirls that drummer Brian Southall was trying to pull off were not happening AT ALL. However, they eventually won me over, and I quickly started tapping my foot to their steady grooves. The thing is, their sound is reminiscent of Taking Back Day...whom I like and whom I just saw play live, but who are SEVERELY played out. It always seems like whenever a particular style becomes popular, 5 million other bands start copying it. Listen, I dug them, I was into it...they just didn't seem too original after I've heard so many other bands who sound the exact same way. Anyhow, good tunes are good tunes, I guess...even if they're incredibly lacking innovation. See for yourself at www.boysnightout.com.

On the other hand, headliners Millencolin picked up any slack there was on this night. Touring in support of their new record, KING-WOOD, the band titillated the audience with every song. To start the show, drummer Larzon began pounding franticly under a cloud of blue light. Behind him, the KINGWOOD backdrop hung proudly. Due to the fact that most of the people in the front looked like line—backers from pro football teams, crowd-surfers began to get tossed around with ease. I had never seen such effortless people—throwing before in my life. I mean, I know I see this stuff all the time, but I'm telling you, this was different. People were getting catapulted in to the air as if they were the weight of a feather. As with any show Millencolin plays, the venue quickly turned into one humongous pit. Shirts came off, tattoos flowed in abundance, and bodies began moving in a circular direction at once. Millencolin played many songs off of KINGWOOD, such as "Ray", "Biftek Supernova", and "Shut You Out". And don't forget fan favorite "Mr. Clean", which caused a sing-along loud enough to be heard from space. All in all, the show was awesome. It certainty made me go home and reopen my Millencolin collection.



EARLIMART OKKERVIL RIVER

May 21, 2005 @ the Troubadour (Los Angeles, CA)
Text and Photos by Aimee Curran

stepped inside the Troubadour to find wall-to-wall Elliot Smith types. This was no surprise, as 90% of Earlimart's last album pays respects to the fallen music hero. However, I had no idea who opening band Okkervil River, was but my god, I wanted to shoot myself within the first two minutes. You would think that in order to grab the audience's attention, a band would open their show with something electric, something really driven and rad. But Okkervil River opened up with a song that made me feel as though I was being dragged through mud. I turned to my friend, and we gave each other the look of "What the fuck is this shit?" She says to me, "God, these guys are a total Bright Eyes rip-off." I'm not a huge Bright Eyes fan, but from what I have heard, I would tend to agree with this statement, as they overextended themselves to show how much angst was inside, how soulful and deep they could get. LAME. I got really annoyed by the keyboardist, because he was lip-synching to every song. He just stood there with his

head down, mouthing the words. That's fine, but when you have a mic set up in front of you, why not just sing along? It definitely would have saved the majority of the show, which at times sounded like a cat being swung by its tail into a bucket of cold water. The band was very consistent in not announcing their songs, making the whole show seem somewhat pretentious, as if they were the shit and everyone should know what was being played within the first three notes. However, Okkervil River did bring in the harmonica, which was a delightful addition to a seemingly never-ending mess of melodies. The harmonica gave the music a folksy, country feel, which I think is a more appropriate vein for a band that at times sounded like a lounge act. I skipped out on the last couple songs to sit at the nearby bus stop, while my friend smoked a small fruit.

Knowing that Earlimart was going to be on soon, I went back inside and managed to beat through the crowd with my camera to the front. After Okkervil River's mess, I was beyond stamped that Earlimart opened their show with a catchy tune, instantly grabbing my interest. They, too, were not very good about announcing their songs, but man, did they made the crowd move! It was as if an

underlying energy was flowing, making a gentle wave effect happen. The passion of their music and love for Elliot Smith came shining through in an understated and humble manner that drew me in. This was beautiful and engaging melodies and lyrics that far surpassed my expectations. Intriguing, soulful, and honest, Earlimart proved that it's possible to show off without showing off.





Anthrax Supervillain May 22, 2005 @ Key Club (Los Angeles, CA) Photos and text by Richie Wu

excited to see Anthrax. I had not seen them play live in many years. Even more exciting was the fact that the original lineup was back together again: Joey Belladonna, Frank Bello, Charlie Benante, Scott Ian, and Dan Spitz—all on the same stage. I definitely did not want to miss this. However, never go to an Anthrax show looking for hot chicks, 'cause they're not there, that's for sure. In fact, you don't even have to shower, because it's a DUDE FEST all the way! All you need is a black T-shirt with a slogan like "Long Live Metal" or "Metal Never Dies," and you're in. This sold-out show was proof of this. Anthrax fans old and new united to let their mullets flow freely and to carry the torch of everlasting metal. ALL JOKING ASIDE, believe me when I say that this show was the REAL DEAL. It was fantastic, superb, and heavy as hell in every way!

Supervillain opened the show and delivered a powerhouse set full of intensity. Songs like "Beyond Possession" and "Empty Hands" were standouts and definitely made everyone take notice. At one point, singer Daniel Clements yelled to the crowd, "Fuck Metallica!"—for what reason, I am not sure, but the swarm of loyal Anthrax fans seemed to appreciate the notion and responded with an unruly roar. They put on a superior show composed of catchy melodies and heavy guitars. Bass player James Morris certainly gave an entertaining performance, with his animated facial expressions and pounding bass riffs. Check them out at www.supervillainrocks.com.

As I anxiously waited for Anthrax to appear, a large projector was lowered from above the stage. To my surprise, footage of vintage porn from the '50s began to play. As I watched the screen, a rather hefty lady ("Big Tubby," as the guy next to me affectionately named her) began to play peek-a-boo with her





top. Everyone seemed to get a kick out of the pre-show material chosen to warm up the audience. By the time Anthrax hit the stage, the crowd was ready to release their pent–up angst. They played all of the classic Anthrax songs: "Deathrider", "Madhouse", "Caught in a Mosh", "I Am the Law", "Indians", "Antisocial", "Got the Time"...so many great tunes. It just never stopped. Since there was not a photo pit at the front of the stage, everyone was forced to shoot photos from the back. After the third song, the house publicist asked all photographers to stop shooting. Magically, I managed to find a prime spot next to the stage, where I able to shoot more photos. I spent most of the night watching guitar player Scott Ian tear it up. I have now come to the conclusion that he is by far the best rhythm guitarist the metal genre has seen. The laser-like speed and precision of his right hand was unbelievable. One of the many encores they played, a rambunctious rendition of "I'm the Man ", was my personal favorite. It's so cool to see that even after 20 years of thrashing madness, Anthrax still destroy everything that is lightweight and disposable. Enough said.





B.R.M.C.
GIANT DRAG
May 28, 2005 @ the Little Radio Warehouse (Los
Angeles, CA)
Text and Photos by W.C. Moriarity

lack Rebel Motorcycle Club's first live show in almost a year wasn't even announced until a few days before the gig was supposed to happen. Even then, only those who were tuned in to the world of Internet broadcaster Little Radio—who put on the surprise event—were hip to what was transpiring. But even if you were hip enough to be in the loop, you still had to drag your lazy ass out of bed in time to get down to Sea Level Records in Echo Park to buy yourself one of the only 200 tickets that were going on sale there at noon the day before the event. With a limit of two tickets per person, they still managed to sell out in the first hour. The rare chance to see the B.R.M.C. boys in an exclusive, intimate setting was obviously worth the effort to many devoted fans.

The show itself served as a bit of a "warehouse-warming" party for the new Little Radio Warehouse in downtown Los Angeles, where more of these surprise shows featuring other interesting bands are planned for the future. The entire evening felt like the beginning of what could be a whole new cool little scene popping up downtown. Of course, the anticipation of seeing a band like B.R.M.C. in this kind of setting—along with the \$2 beer—only added to the festive feelings that were going around.

Local L.A. band Giant Drag delivered a brief opening set that included a cover version of the Chris Isaak hit "Wicked Game", which lead singer Annie Hardy Joked was inspired by her alleged childhood romance with the young Mr. Isaak.

B.R.M.C. hit the stage around 12:30 a.m. to enthusiastic cheers from the crowd. After having had a bit of a falling out, the band has reconciled with original drummer Nick Jago, who's now back in his familiar place behind the kit-and he seemed happy to be there. Once things got underway, his long hair never stopped whipping around wildly, while bassist Robert Turner and guitarist Peter Hayes traded off lead vocals. The sweat-soaked trio pounded out song after song from their first two albums. Highlights of the set included "Six Barrel Shotgun", "Red Eyes and Tears", and "Whatever Happened to My Rock 'n' Roll". With fans dancing on a walkway hovering over the stage throughout the show, the whole thing looked a bit like some sort of choreographed scene out of some crazy rock 'n' roll movie. After coming back for their encore, the band debuted a number of songs from their new album, HOWL (due to be released August 22). The new tunes sounded a lot simpler and more strippeddown than the feedback-drenched songs from the group's first two albums, with strong blues and folk influences much more obviously on display in the new material. After playing for a little over an hour, the band thanked the crowd for having made the effort to come out and called it a night. The lights flashed on and off, signaling to the crowd that it was time to clear out.

If this inaugural show was any indication, there should be plenty of reasons to be coming back to Little Radio Warehouse soon!



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ABANDON IN REALITY WE SUFFER **EARACHE RECORDS**

STATE OF WAR BUILDING

EARACHE RECORDS
Maybe I'm tired, or maybe I'm bored, bored with slow, uninteresting, monotonous metal. This is Abandon. IN REALITY WE SUFFER is the perfect title for this album, because in reality listening to it is suffering. Although there is deep, scary growling and lots of bass to back it up, I can't help but wander. Hailing from Sweden, Abandon takes the idea of being slow for dramatic effect way too seriously. On a lighter note, I have to give props to track 3, "Somnambulistic". It's not only a good song, , but the title is amazing, a rather awesome word that means motor skills practiced while asleep—i.e. sleep walking. I'll admit I looked it up, but only because the rest of the album lingers on too long for it to keep my attention.

-Courtney Strain



ACID KING SMALL STONE

Acid King's pummeling low-end attack is once again captured in album form, a Billy Anderson-produced seven-track excursion that solidifies this San Francisco-based trio's place on stoner-rock

solidities this San Francisco-based trio's place on stoner-rock upper echelon. Combining hypnotic guitar riffs, thunderous bass, and an unfailing drum groove into a cauldron of raucously rumbling rawk, III boasts some of the most enticing and trance-inducing radiance when need be (e.g., "War of the Mind"). Acid King's latest sojourn into the void is nothing short of essential for all who worship the fuzzed-out riff and all which accompanies it. www.smallstone.com -Mike SOS



ADEMA PLANETS EARACHE

How the hell did Adema end up on Earache, the home of the heavy? Well, here they are, sans Jonathan Davis's kid brother Marky Chavez, who's been replaced by the equally generic Luke Caraccioli. They still follow the action movie soundtrack guide to hard-rock songwriting. If you still dig music in the nu-metal vein, Adema is still carrying its tattered flag around—and much like on its past efforts, isn't really doing anything to elicit any interest by

anyone over 16 years old and female. www.earache.com



ANAGRAM SONGS FROM FAR AWAY SCENERY RECORDS

SCENERY RECORDS
Playful synth melodies are like candy to my ears, as they work to glue all the elements together. The airy, robotic, luscious female vocals play naturally against it all, adding a nearly organic appeal. The inherent conflict is pulled off majestically enough. The endearing calmness of Death Cab for Cutie is obvious, but musically this is more interesting, and Anagram come off as a far more expressive and creative band, what with the variety in their guitar, synth, drums, melodies, and vocal delivery. For more info, visit anagrammusic.com.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



ANTIGAMA DISCOMFORT SELFMADEGOD

If any album title suited a release perfectly, it's this one, as Polish If any album title suited a release perfectly, it's fins one, as Poilsh punishers. Antigama's devastatingly demented release.

DISCOMFORT cuts the bullshit and goes for the throat. Armed with malicious guitars (producing both crusty riffs and technical wizardry), wickedly sadistic drumming, and the sort of vocals that scare little kids and household pets, this quartet's diabolical display of dissonance and distress takes the grindcore genre out of the shadows of Satan and straight to the horrors of real life. While this is an album that goes the control of the state of t

13 tracks deep and runs a bit over the half-hour mark, each song is given a proper amount of time to fester in your head, even as the cacophony whizzes by you at an alarming rate. If you dig Pig Destroyer, Impaled, or Nasum, you'll love what Antigama bring to the table. www.selfmadegod.com



ASGUARD WIKKA THIS DARK REIGN

Asguard is a metal troupe from the Eastern European country of Belarus whose sloppy melding of black, NWOBHM, and virtuoso metal would benefit from a better recording and some tightening. With some Cookie Monster vocals strewn in between Iron Maiden-esque guitar runs and some heroic six-string playing, WIKKA's overall feel sounds much like Children of Bodom without the

bit disjointed, this disc hits its peak when the guitars intertwine to create a savage double lick that would make Judas Priest (whose "Leather Rebel" is covered here") proud (e.g., "The Black Wandering of Death Version 1"). (www.devildollrecords.com

-Mike SOS



ATREYU THE CURSE VICTORY RECORDS

Our favorite poster boys for the new melodic metalcore movement, Atreyu, have released yet another powerhouse album. I've got to hand it to Atreyu, the sound quality on this album far surpasses hand it to Atreyu, the sound quality on this album far surpasses anything the group has released previously. The album is a seamless blend of metal, hardcore, indie rock, and punk. Tough enough for the metalheads and soft enough for the wimpy people standing behind the pits. It seems that they front-loaded the album with the best songs, leaving an entire second half of an album that doesn't stand up to the level set by the first five songs. If you're into progressive metal, do yourself a favor and go buy this album. -ADF



AXEL RUDI PELL THE BALLADS III SPV

Hard rockin' German axeman Axel Rudi Pell has put out his third installment of ballads on the appropriately-titled THE BALLADS III. This 11-track collection sounds like 1988 all over again—so much This 11-track collection sounds like 1988 all over again—so much so that the only thing missing is a can of Aqua Net and some fringed leather jackets. However, fans of the beleaguered but ultimately memorable entity known as the power ballad will rejoice over this collection. Compiling the softer side of Pell's last three releases, along with three new cuts (one being a soulful cover of Rainbow's "The Temple of the King"), THE BALLADS III may not be an essential purchase, but if you're a fan with a completist complex or are a little curious on how little the power ballad has changed over the last 20 years, this CD is for you. www.spvusa.com -Mike SOS



ANATOMY OF DISASTER AT THE DEEP END RECORDS

The music of Bait is amazing hardcore metal. This four-piece from the U.K. have been able to create an album that is no less than spectacular. Intense and dark lyrics that will make your ears bleed

spectacular. Intense and dark lyrics mat will make your ears bleed and raw anger that explodes in your head like time bombs makes this album sickly magnetic. Insanely memorable lyrics like "But the need to consume engulfs all / Sense and reason have no price" (from the second track of the album, "364 and Counting"); and "The lines / Are so blurred / All I can see is the lie" ("Forked Tongue Evolution"). With thought-provoking lyrics and music to make your brain melt, ANATOMY OF DISASTER is an album every metal-head should own. Check out their Website at www.thebaitvoid.com for an awesome bio and media. -Courtney Strain



BALATONIZER OCCLUSED IN OTTUSITY THIS DARK REIGN

32 tracks of sweltering grindcore is what the Italian trio known as Balatonizer dish out on OCCLUSED IN OTTUSITY. What makes this release so endearing is not the Cookie Monster on crack vocals or the incessant barrage of rapid-fire guitars and inhumane drumbeats, but the samples of real criminals boasting of their heinous acts against society. How's that for a slice of reality? And it's all done in Italian, which only adds to the mystique. If you dig crushing grindcore and THE SOPRANOS, this disc is for you. www.devildollrecords.com -Mike SOS



BLEED THE SKY PARADIGM ENTROPY NUCLEAR BLAST

Orange County sextet Bleed the Sky are the epitome of what metal is in 2005. With that said, don't expect the raging guitars, torturous screams, and crass rhythm arrangements on PARADIGM OF ENTROPY to surprise you. This is all in the vein of Drowning Pool, Every Time I Die, and many other bands. It's okay for a quick metal -Darren Ratner



BLESSED BY A BROKEN HEART ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR BLOOD & INK

BLOOD & INK
Christian metalcore clan Blessed by a Broken Heart aim to replace
Atreyu as the 16-year-old female's new pin-up kings, yet these
Canadians lack the creativity to do so. On the band's bland ninetrack release, the gorged guitars and razor-throated vocals sound
like countless other outfits'. Worse yet, when the band decides to
go retro (in the form of rapping and '80s metalling), it falls flat fast.
However, the cover at (a bad-ass skull emblazoned with a twin-

turret machine gun and two intercrossed guitars) would make quite the conversation piece as a tattoo. Sadly, the album fails to even pique similar interest, although "OMG!" does show sufficient signs of life via a chugging breakdown and guttural vocals that rips into a Bury Your Dead-meets-Unearth crescendo...but one track does not an album make. www.bloodandinkrecords.com -Mike SOS



UNHAND THE WORLD
CRIMSON FIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Blivit is an up and coming trio from the Philadelphia area, and UNHAND THE WORLD is their quirky, highly catchy debut full-length. While essentially a power rock trio, the band seems to be missing one of the more important elements in a band: the guilar, but the bass, drums, keyboards, and tabla more than make up for the lack of guitar power. Plus, very solid arrangements, introspective and interesting lyrics, and a catchy pop sensibility quality album that may be a tad out of the box, check out UNHAND THE WORLD.



BLOOD RED THRONE ALTERED GENESIS EARACHE

Norway's Blood Red Throne boasts a brutal death-metal attack that relentlessly shakes your brain throughout the 12-track ALTERED GENESIS. Pummeling guitar riffs and dastardly death-metal double-bass drumming prevail over the entire disc, laying down the powerful grooves found on "Ripsaw Resentment" and "Arterial Lust" with demonic enchantment. Encapsulating the trademark chaotic sounds of both Florida and Sweden's death-metal scenes, Blood Red Throne's ode to evil may not be the most groundbreaking release, but you'd be hard pressed to find a band that can properly convey the savagery of both scenes so well, www.earache.com -Mike SOS

well. www.earache.com -Mike SOS





BRAINSTORM LIQUID MONSTER METAL BLADE

German power-metal troupe Brainstorm barrel down the gates on the quintet's latest offering, the 11-track LIQUID MONSTER. Fusing triumphant choruses with exhilarating guitar runs and interlocking rhythms, tracks like "Mask of Life" and "Lifeline" will

summon up the metal from deep inside your soul. Falling somewhere in between vintage Queensryche, Helloween, and catchy, while the band's overall flurry of metal is overwhelming to the casual fan but will undoubtedly please those who revel in Priest, Maiden, Dio, and the like, Iyou yearn for the days when falsetto metal voices were king and the riffs came fast and furious, Brainstorm has the remedy you crave. www.metalblade.com -Mike SOS



BULLET TREATMENT WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT? [E.P.] BASEMENT RECORDS

BASEMENT RECORDS

I'm not going to lie to you, reader: I've liked Bullet Treatment since I was a little ol' teenager following my friends bands from club to club. WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT? [E.P.] is a wonderful album. It's angry, screaming gutter punk at its best. I noticed while reading the liner notes that Bullet Treatment thanked The Jeff Tucker Extravaganza. I'm sorry to break this to you, Bullet Treatment, but The Jeff Tucker Extravaganza broke up. I'm not sure what happened to most of the OTHER band members, but Jeff Tucker is the singer in Rock Kills Kid nowadays. It's been a while since JTE has been around. If you knew them well enough to thank them, you should have known they were no longer around. Some bands don't seem to pass that test of time. Hopefully, Bullet Treatment won't be one of those bands. seem to pass that test of time. Hopefully, Bullet Treatment won't be one of those bands.



BURY YOUR DEAD YOU HAD ME AT HELLO **EULOGY**

Well, Bury Your Dead kick off YOU HAD ME AT HELLO (their Well, Bury Your Dead kick off YOU HAD ME AT HELLO (their debut, which initially came out in 2002 on Alveran) with the heavy-hitting "Sunday's Best", and they don't let up one bit during the ensuing nine tracks. Incorporating absolutely NO "clean" vocals or melodic breaks nor much of a metal-core sound, these guys just keep it real with pure, unadulterated, brutal, breakdown-heavy East Coast hardcore, making this album great for fans of Terror and the like. Since this album initially came out (and after the band called it quits

Terror and the like. Since this album initially came out (and after the band called it quits for a brief time), BYD have signed with Victory and put out this record's follow-up, COVER YOUR TRACKS, in 2004. Still, in this reviewer's humble opinion, ...HELLO is superior. -Janelle Jones



CALIBRETTO/MERCURY RADIO THEATER ALL OF THESE THINGS DO NOT BELONG STANDARD

I became really confused when I listened to this record. I wasn't sure if I was listening to the new Mr. Bungle, the new Gas Huffer, the new Quasar Wut-Wut, or the sound of Jim Carroll on even more crack than usual. This album will make you want to dance, but not in the way that Bruce Springsteen does, but more like the

way that a porcupine crawling up your pant leg would. If this band were a food dish, they'd be baked beans poured over uncooked yellowtail with chocolate frosting—but it would taste good. I cannot wait to see this band live, as the show is supposedly amazing, according to The Strokes drummer Fabrizio Moretti. If he says it's good, it's got to be. -Zac



CATASTROPHIC SELF-RELEASED

Churning out some old-school death-metal riffs and sensibilities, the members of NY-based Catastrophic are no strangers to the scene. Boasting members of Pyrexia and Obituary, this threesong sampler sounds like the perfect mix of the two bands, as the mid-tempo deathgrip of "Dismale" should leave your ears discernibly battered and bruised. If you're big into the mid-90s death-metal sound, this band (now on tour in Europe) is just what strophic.org -Mike SOS

you need. www.catastrophic.org



CIVET MASSACRE DISASTER RECORDS

These ladies express life experiences via an honest, sexy, aggressive sound. Their debut CD release is sex, love, and rock 'n' roll contained in melodic punk riffs. They have a gritty edge while remaining accessible. These are high-energy tracks you can sing along to with your fist in the air. Reminiscent of those who have come before, they borrow from all to make it their own. Regardless of the fact the lead vocals resemble a female Tom still a digastible album. In fact, the respusses the state of the sex of th

Waits coked out, it's still a digestible album. In fact, the raspy vocals only add to the aesthetic of MASSACRE. And with lyrics like, "Listen, motherfucker, if your dick wasn't so small, I wouldn't have left you in the first place" ... -Kevin Farr



CLARA VENUS GREATEST HURTS SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED
Is it merely coincidental that lovelorn trio Clara Venus released its melancholic rock opus to fractured relationships on Valentine's Day? Probably not, because few things this clever outfit does seem unplanned, from the dazzlingly dynamic rhythm of "Doesn't Work Right" to the AC/DC-meets-The Replacements shuffle of "Liar". GREATEST HURTS exposes the band's losses in matters of the heart with wide-eyed honesty and rock 'n' roll pretense, never losing sight that their hearts are both on their sleeves and entrenched in spacious riffs (as in "Talk") or dragging melodies (like on "Dry Razor's Hand"). With the influences of Dylan, Westerberg, Cobain, and Bowie shining through their heartbreaking melodies, GREATEST HURTS is an album to cry along to, a collection of breakup songs that truly encompass all of those emotions from the day after and beyond. www.claravenus.com -Mike SOS



DEVIEWS IN CA CONGRESS OF ODDITTIES

SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED

ALIVE is the latest release by Queens, NY's Congress of Odditties, whose brand of love rock is accentuated by sultry siren Jessica Rendon, propelling these 12 tracks to another level. While the band provides a soulfully danceable (think late '70s Studio 54 rock à la Blondie or Chic meets PJ Harvey) backdrop on tracks like "To Dig You", on the hard rock-meets-disco design of "Follow Me" and the bass-grooving "Incarnate Man", Rendon's doe-eyed delivery and silky smooth voice transcend your typical female-fronted rock music and thrusts you into a time warp complete with lighted dance floors and risqué behavior. Diva-fronted rock without the tantrums and drama, Congress of Odditties throw in dollops of bluesy guitars, lounge-rock percussion, and funky bass and come up with a solid release. www.congressofodditties.com -Mike SOS



CULT OF LUNA SALVATION EARACHE

EARACHE
Sensational Swedish septet Cult of Luna returns with SALVATION, a gallant eight-track, 73-minute affair. Juxtaposing the ethereal vibe of Neurosis with the sonic crush of Isis, tracks like "Vague Illusions" morph from aggressive bits of vocal shrapnel to atmospheric guitar interludes. While some may argue that the album is weighty and overwrought overall, tracks like the bone-chilling "White Cell" showcase just how mighty Cult of Luna can be when the death-metal world meets the prog-rock realm in a battle for earth-shaking metal's coveted crown. As Axl Rose once sang, you just need "a lil' patience" (and perhaps some good drugs) to fully appreciate the gothic doom and metallic mope Cult of Luna pristinely deliver. www.earache.com
-Mike SOS



CYBER-JACK THE GREAT RED SPOT SURPRISE RECORDS

This five-man band likes to spin off of the fact that they were forged from the violence of Sao Paulo, Brazil. As I read further through the

from the violence of Sao Paulo, Brazil. As I read further through the bio, I found out that recognition is all they hope for and that if nobody likes their album, then they are stuck in Brazil with no life's purpose. No pressure, though. It starts off with a promising Tool-like drone with a creepy piano in the background. Cyber-Jack has all the F.U. energy of gritty dirt punk, but it's presented in a more do have a unique sound. I don't often find myself saying that (except when it applies to the hopelessly insane in the subways playing for nickels). Tempo changes allow for a range of different emotional appeal, and there is some sensitivity mixed in with the proclamations of anger. -Thomas Murray



DARKEST HOUR
PARTY SCARS AND PRISON BARS DVD VICTORY RECORDS

This DVD is packed with a history of the band done in bathtub interviews and various other locations. Some Warped Tour footage

interviews and various other locations. Some Warped Tour footage and tales from the road give us a further idea of what the band is like offstage. They are a likable sort, although not as diabolical and mean as I might have imagined from listening to some of their music before watching this. The reocurring George W. cut-out skit is amusing, as well as an arrest story. This humanizes these kids further. That is the coolest thing about these DVDs is that they remind us that these are people just like us, which I think is important to remember once in a while—especially for people actually in bands. This DVD peels back a few layers off of one of the harder bands I have heard lately—and it turns out they tell a decent story. -Thomas Murray



DAYS AWAY MAPPING AN INVISIBLE WORLD FUELED BY RAMEN RECORDS

FUELED BY RAMEN RECORDS

MAPPING AN INVISIBLE WORLD is Days Away's debut album, and as far as debut albums go, it's not too bad. The album (which is produced by Neil Avron, who is responsible for such acts as Yellowcard and New Found Glory) has put together 11 tracks of purely atmospheric indie rock filled with thick melodies and almost lo-fi guitars. The tempo never really picks up throughout the album, so make sure that you're expecting a purely mellow experience with this record. While the quality and talent are there, MAPPING AN INVISIBLE WORLD is the kind of record I can put on in the background and forget about. It may get a tad on the boring side from time to time, but there's no denying that these guys are talented musicians. -Dane Jackson



DE NOVO DAHL CATS AND KITTENS THEORY 8 RECORDS

Theory 8 records

The debut full-length from Nashville's quirky art-pop pioneers De Novo Dahl is a long and complicated affair. With a two-disc set consisting of 16 original songs on the "Cats" disc and all 16 songs remixed on the "Kittens" disc, the band overwhelms the listener with quantity. There's a little bit of everything her, including sweet pop tunes, funk, subdued rock, and a sense that the band is moving in six different directions at once. The band is probably best known for its outlandish live shows where each unpredictable gig presents a new puzzle. The musicians have dressed in hot pink Daisy Dukes, hosted ice-cream socials and spaghetti dinners during a show, and turned one of the gigs into a beach party. While one can't help but admire the sheer audacity of these inspired artists, the band should put a little more focus on the music.

Dug focus on the music



DEBRIS INC. DEBRIS INC CANDLELIGHT

When members of seminal metal outfits Trouble and St. Vitus join forces in a project, what's a listener to expect? Debris Inc. answer that burning question with the sheer sonic force and a huge retro

that burning question with the sheer sonic force and a nuge retro sound that actually is more punk than you'd expect from purveyors and pioneers of the doom-metal scene. On this 17-track opus, Dave Chandler (St. Vitus), Ron Holzner (Trouble), and a rotating array of drummers (including Jimmy Bower of Down/Eyehategod) turn the clock back a bit and pound out some lo-fi, drunk/stoned crossover punk à la DRI, DOA, and Black Flag. But fear not, there's doom aplenty here, as the creeping "The Old Man and His

Bong", the slow churn of "Pain", and "The Life and Time of Claude and Elmo" relive the glory days of doom...but not before Debris Inc. bitch-slap you with the unsanitized sounds that punk used to make (e.g., "Shut Up" and the Fear cover "I Love Living in the City"). If you remember any of these guys' past works or have heard of their legacy, this CD worth the listen. www.candlelightrecords.co.uk -Mike SOS



DOG FACED GODS

STONED COUNCIL VOODOO NATION RECORDS
STONED COUNCIL is absolutely horrible. The album is filled with ISTONED COUNCIL is absolutely horrible. The album is filled with hook-laden, radio-friendly alternative metal that just feels so uninspired. Even when the band tries to add a harder to edge to some of their songs (like on "Brings Me Down") it sounds contrived and forced. I'm not 100% sure why critics have been hailing this as hard rock, because in my opinion it's stale, generic, and repetitive. While these all sound like negative things, Dog Faced Gods' sound has cemented them commercial success. The splashes of hip-hop throughout also make them seem like nu-metal rejects. Maybe if these guys laid off the pot they could release a record that is worth listening to.

a record that is worth listening to.

-Dane Jackson



DOPE SMOOTHIE GO STRIKE

GO STRIKE
ELITIST LOW BROW RECORDS
Dope Smoothie is a Seattle three-piece that plays a style of lo-fi
rock that is very much in the vein of The Pixies and Sonic Youth.
Although the sound is very early '90s, I dig it because it's different
than every other rock band out there that is doing the '80s vibe. On
a side note, thank god this isn't a beauty contest, or the guys in
Dope Smoothie would be S.O.L. -ADF



D IS FOR DIRTY

SELF-RELEASED

I'm sure these boys think they are putting out profound punk music that will someday reach the masses, but, well, they're wrong. Singing "Put your hat on straight" over and over again in a song doesn't make it a cool song. Who fucking cars which way you wear your hat?! The vocals on this album are also not very good. I enjoy bands with singers who scream, I enjoy bands with singers who sing, but I do not enjoy a singer who sounds as if he is grunting out all of the words. If you like grunting punk music with stupid lyrics, then you might possibly dig this band; otherwise, don't bother. -Manda-Dex-Punk



EARTHLESS SONIC PRAYER GRAVITY RECORDS

This is an all-instrumental rock album that pretty much sound like it could be the result of an all-night acid binge. I'm all for experimentation, but this album sounds like a thousand rock albums that came out in the 1970s, or it could be what you hear every time you sit in a Guitar Center for too long. Gravity Records has put out some great recordings in its history, but this is definitely not one of them. -ADF



EL TORO
MAY AND MARIELLE UNDECIDED RECORDS

UNDECIDED RECORDS
Terribly boring pop/rockl This is what the mainstream deems "singer/songwriter" material—which means crap like Ryan Cabrera. I'm a fan of mellow, acoustic moods and a very personal vocal delivery; however, this type of artists are so extremely boring and stereotypical with their songwriting that suicide is definitely a constitute boat the album is the cohesive concept of

and stereotypical with their songwriting that suicide is definitely a possibility. A good point about the album is the cohesive concept of MAY AND MARIELLE. Many thoughts are revisited about the two females throughout the album. So, El Toro is a step above the rest of the crap by the sheer fact that they aren't full on uncreative bozos. However, the songs are socooo long and monotonous that my statement about suicide must once again be revisited. Unless you're going to blow me away with profound statements or musical expression, I'm not gonna hear your six-freaking-minute song. For more info, visit undecidedrecords.com. -Norberto Gomez, Jr



ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN BURN BRIGHT...BURN FAST! TKO RECORDS

Long after Electric Frankenstein had made its name in high-energy, Long after Electric Frankenstein had made its name in high-energy, fast-paced, rocking hardcore a fast and furious reality, I heard people start to call such rock "drag rock"—like drag racing. Sure, I can feel the tires grabbing the asphalt as they turn semi-liquid under friction and the g-forces of going faster more dangerously than man in your living room by the speakers with a cold one in hand, this is the soundtrack for that. Electric Frankenstein also gets credit for picking some winning covers: "Talk, Talk" (Music Machine), "Moving Targets" (Flo & Eddie), and "Candy-O" (The Cars). www.TKORecords.com -Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



ETERNAL FLIGHT POSITIVE RAGE

CRUZ DEL SUR

Eternal Flight is by far one of the most uplifting metal bands to come down the pike in a very long time. Despite the fact that this outfit plays the kind of power metal usually relegated to songs about dungeons, dragons, swords, and sorcerers, this French outfit is equipped with both lyrics and an attitude that put forth all-around good feelings. 11 tracks of Primal Fear meets early Queensryche, majestic yet operatic metal is what you'll find on POSITIVE RAGE. If you like your metal progressive (à la Dream Theater) with power metal parts that fans of both Nevermore and Helloween would appreciate, then this quintet is for you. www.cruzdelsurmusic.com



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EVERGREY A NIGHT TO REMEMBER INSIDE OUT MUSIC

So here we are with a live show recording. It starts with a baby crying and a deep devil voice, and then people cheering. Oh no. You can hear the cheers pick up as the band comes out and rips from "Intro" to the first actual song, "Blinded". Something isn't right here. Oh, these guys are Swedish longhairs—that explains it. Well, if you like this band or this dark-metal genre of music, then this disc will be certainly rub your belly. "Melodic metal" is a good way to describe these guys. Occasionally the synthesizers will run parallel to a vocal chorus that will pump up even the laziest of listener slobs and make them run laps around the house, as this disc is actually quite exciting, at times. I think I hate it So here we are with a live show recording. It starts with a baby

laps around the house, as this disc is actually quite exciting, at times. I think I hate it when the band talks in between songs, though. I don't get it. -Thomas Murray



EYES OF THE BETRAYER RECOVERY

Kansas City, MO, natives Eyes of the Betrayer's five-track metalcore display borrows from the Swedish metal scene quite a bit, making RECOVERY a smidgen more brutal than many other albums. A well-placed death growl accentuates songs like "lcarus Demented" from being merely average, yet the same tired singing parts that reoccur in so many bands' arsenals rear their heads here, detracting the overall feel of the song. When these guys get low and fast, they seem unstoppable. While this five-track disc clocks in at about 30 minutes, there's not a lot of meandering going on, just a lot of impressive twists and heavy-handed turns

not a lot of meandering going on, just a lot of impressive twists and heavy-handed turns that allow Eyes of the Betrayer to stand out from the metalcore pack. www.recorserecords.com -Mike SOS



FAIRMONT HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE RENFIELD RECORDS

C'mon, guys, other people aren't so bad. You may sound almost precisely like a mix between Thursday, My Chemical Romance, and Cursive, but that gives you no right to bash other people. I mean, hey, that includes mel But really, this album is just about the least inspiring and ambitious record I've heard this year. I can have that not one note borderdline of this album is prigned or

truly say that not one note/chord/line of this album is original or different from what a majority of Eyeball Records bands are doing, as well as emocore superstars Thursday. Bottom line: wake me up when it's over -Zac



FIGURE OF MERIT

VATIC CODE:BREAKER AND EARACHE RECORDS
"It's one of those days / When you don't want to wake up / Everyone sucks and everything is fucked up." Although I should be publicly executed for knowing Limp Bizkit lyrics, little Freddy Durst was on to something. Those few lines describe the pain, anguish, and rock-hard emotion in VATIC. I don't for one minute want to compare Figure of Merit with Limp Bizkit, but I genuinely enjoyed the Figure of Merit album. This album is so intense and dark, the heartache of betrayal, self-loathing, and disappointment just resonate in every poetic lyric and slow, deep, melodic riff. They may not be out on tour anytime soon for this album, but hardcore metal and Figure of Merit fans alike will want to wait to see what these guys have in store for a live show. -Courtney Strain



FIRST TIME FLYING INFATUATED SELF-RELEASED

have in store for a live show. -Courtney Strain

SELF-RELEASED
First Time Flying got their start in Wyoming, which is about as isolated from those coastal urban trend-makers as possible. They have that singing/screaming/pleading/jamming thing down, but they have not forgotten that smalltown sensibility, as their sound similar to Cobed and Cambria but also have the bombastic qualities of Co+Ca predecessors Rush. Somehow a six-song, self-released EP by a band with a Myspace-reliant Website warrants a barcode, but that just goes to show they are thinking big. They have the vox that made Geddy Lee's career and the sound that permeates MTV 2 now, and they do it well...but it takes more than a move to the big city to make it to the big time. -Erika Owens



FREEDOM CALL THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

German power-metal troupe Freedom Call drum up all of the standard rock clichés on THE CIRCLE OF LIFE, from megadramatic guitar solos to fist-pumping anthems like "Carry On" that'd sound best accompanying clips of international soccer highlights. With a likeness that combines Manowar, Gamma Ray, and Symphony X, this quintet takes its harmless, kitschy metal very seriously—and the musicianship behind songs like "Starlight" accentuate that. While the happy-go-lucky feel of this 12-track disc is a bit misplaced in 2005, if it's innocuous power metal you're looking for, these guys deliver the goods proper. www.spvusa.com -Mike SOS



GRATITUDE GRATITUDE ATLANTIC

ATLANTIC
Featuring Jonah Matranga (Far) and Mark Weinberg (Crumb), the debut release from Gratitude is a glistening 12-track array of heartfelt hard rock with a surprising arena-rock swagger. From the opener "Drive Away" and its contagious chorus to the simple yet effective nature of tracks like "This is the Part" and pop-punk gem "Another Division St.", this quintet offer the perfect luxurious alternative to U2 and Jimmy Eat World. With a SOUNDS probably accentuates that a tad) and oozing with the most straight-adar ock sensibility of Matranga's illustrious career, this new-found direct approach allows Gratitude to explore a big rock sound—and embrace a dynamic niche in the process. If you dug Far, dig Incubus, or are a mark for hooky, big-sounding rock record, this eponymous disc delivers. www.atlanticrecords.com -Mike SOS

BATTLE BORN

Greyscale is a Reno, NV-based quintet transplanted from Long Greyscale is a Reno, NV-based quintet transplanted from Long Island, NY, whose 10-track release presents an intriguing mixed bag of musical styles, with hard and heavy ultimately winning out. Despite the decibel level being tested, these guys are deeply rooted in the dub and drum and bass aspect of music, as most of DISCORD FOR THE DEAD KID's tracks display. Sounding at times like a cross between Dredg, Nonpoint, and like "Get At" and "Searching for Substance" reveal a clash between

Skindred, tracks like "Get At" and "Searching for Substance" reveal a clash between chugging guitars and groove-laden rhythms, while the dub-esque feel of "New Beat" showcases an adventurous side of the group. For a mix of chunk and funk swung with a 10-ton hammer, Greyscale's latest disc is as solid as it gets. www.battlebornrecords.com -Mike SOS



GUAPO BLACK ON IPECAC RECORDINGS

In a world where bands like Black Emperor and Mogwai rule the long, drawn-out instrumental masterpieces, Guapo are left outside the kingdom looking in. Creating a work of six movements that plays for nearly 45 minutes is a very ambitious thing to do. One either achieves such a scheme and basks in the glory of the new form of rock opera...or, in the case of Guapo,

glory of the new form of rock opera...or, in the case of duapo, you fail and appear to be children playing in the sand. They lack the dynamics, the timing the explosions, cohesiveness, while the parts that succeed aren't surprising in their achievement. They lack jaw-dropping instrumentation—obviously a KEY to instrumentals! Overall, they just lack the magic. For more info, visit guapo.co.uk. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



HARD SKIN SAME MEAT DIFFERENT GRAVY

TKO

When this project got started, English trio Hard Skin started out as a band parodying the Oil scene, but they have gone past goofiness and made it to album #2. SAME MEAT DIFFERENT GRAVY takes the stomping two-chord trademarks of the scene and runs rampant through 13 tracks of good-time, hard-hitting, infectious tunes that are the perfect complement to a night of rowdy carousing and drinking way too much. In fact, the band's motto, "Stop thinking and start drinking," endorses that very movement. So, turn your brain off, turn the stereo up, and pogo around your room to tracks like the simple yet effective "Skin Hard" and the subtle fist-pumping anthem "Still Fighting Thatcher". www.tkorecords.com -Mike SOS



HAVOCHATE CYCLE OF PAIN INDECENT MEDIA

Havochate have so much of that '80s rock, Satan-induced racket going on that they sound like something to the effect of Iron Maiden colliding with Slayer. The idea behind CYCLE OF PAIN is just that: pain, and all the good things we've come to love about its affiliations: oppression ("Fiction"), madness ("Cycle of Pain"), violence ("Still Alive"), and more. Nothing like a little

optimism, huh? -Darren Ratner



...ALL THE WAY TO HELL SIN KLUB

SIN KLUB
Gritty, down and dirty rock 'n' roll comes to you courtesy of Highbinder, whose latest 13-track release is laden with the kind of hard-rock riffs that rattle your head and the brash attitude that so much of today's music is completely lacking. This Toledo, OH, quartet's keen ear for melody melded with metallic pretenses make for quite the exhilarating listen, as tracks such as the grabyour-jugular style of "White Lie" and the stoner-rock foundation of "Ward" are solid songs that rock fans will dig. Sounding like a cross between SLAVE TO THE GRINDera Skid Row meeting The Bronx at a Velvet Revolver gig, Highbinder wield the mighty rock sword well sans the glitz and chock full of chunk. Aggressive without sounding forced, glossed in all of the right places (such as the huge arena-rock choruses), and injected with the rock venom both vocally and musically, ...ALL THE WAY TO HELL reaffirms the belief that good rock music is still being churned out underneath what the mainstream jams down your throat. www.sinklub.com -Mike SOS



HOOVER'S G-STRING **ELEPHANT PARTS** RED TIDE RECORDS

Though the band has only been together for 10 years, the third full-length from this Virginia retro trio faithfully brings back the catchy melodies and musical fun of the early '80s. With a pop sound similar to 20/20 or The Knack and a vocalist (Jeff

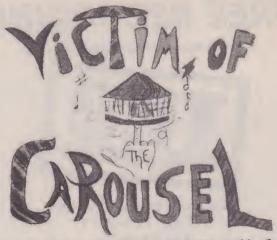
Reinholz) who has an incredible ability to mimic Springsteen, Hoover's G-String has put out a memorable album. There's some tongue-in-cheek humor here, as with a Bush tribute, "Go Back to Texas", the social put-down "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", and a Springsteen cover, "I'm On Fire", that any listener would swear really was the Boss until it launches into a sped-up version that sounds like Johnny Cash on crank. Hoover's G-String is a band that sounds like it's having fun in a local bar. This may not be go platinum, but the fun is infectious. -Dug



HUMAN TELEVISION ALL SONGS WRITTEN BY: GIGANTIC MUSIC

GIGANTIC MUSIC

The debut seven-song mini-album from this Philadelphia-based quartet is a perfect pop gem. With jangly indie guitar riffs, pop hooks that send tingles up your spine, and a sound that hearkens back to early R.E.M., these guys have college-radio hit machine written all over them. The only drawback to this disc is the length. Though it is a hybrid CD with two videos on it, the vinyl version of the album includes a song that is only included as a video on the CD. While many critics compare this band to New Order or Modest Mouse, Human Television has created a more urgent, intense brand of pop that is sure to ingratiate the band to fans and separate it from the thousands of indie groups that flood the collegeradio scene. Pick up this brilliant disc (or the vinyl version) and give it a listen before the inevitable sell-out begins. -Dug the inevitable sell-out begins. -Dug



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IDIOT PILOT STRANGE WE SHOULD MEET, HERE REPRISE RECORDS

The story of Idiot Pilot plays off like a rock 'n' roll fantasy. Two eenagers from Washington bored with the music world in general decide to try to create an amalgam of all their likes: electronica, post-hardcore, and indie experimentation. The result is a perfect

post-nardcore, and indie experimentation. The result is a perfect monster of everything good in these genres. Somehow cohesively constructing ambient, Radiohead-like walls of blips and falsetto vocals with At the Drive-In screeches and aggression, STRANGE WE SHOULD MEET HERE is an extremely mature work from two 18-year-olds. Major labels noticed, and overnight the two teens were signed to Reprise Records. Due to the album's eclectic inner workings, it is destined to be appreciated by a wide range of listeners. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



IMPELLITTERI PEDAL TO THE METAL

Impellitteri features the fancy fretwork of Chris Impellitteri, a guitarist extraordinaire who, unlike other guitar heroes, releases a

guitarist extraordinaire who, unlike other guitar heroes, releases a 10-track album that actually produces well-crafted songs instead of guitar showoffs. While tracks like "Propaganda Mind" rip off Disturbed blatantly and the tongue-in-cheek flavor of "Punk" (supposedly aimed at making fun at the rap-rock explosion) actually makes the band look a little bitter, there's still a lot of powerful numbers on this disc, such as the chunky "Hurricane" and the pounding "Crushing Daze". Alas, if you dig power metal, songs like the cascading "The Writing's on the Wall" hit a homerun. But there are still a slew of flashy six-string tricks on PEDAL TO THE METAL to excite the guitar freak. But Impelliteri goes the extra mile and makes sure to include some compelling hard rock tunes for all audiences, not just gearheads and axe fans. www.spvusa.com -Mike SOS



INCANTATION **DECIMATE CHRISTENDOM OLYMPIC**

OLYMPIC

Merging deliberate dollops of doom with frenzied death metal, veteran troupe Incantation have numerous albums, countless tours, and legions of fans worldwide. The 11-track DECIMATE CHRISTENDOM conjures up yet another barrage of blasphemous brutality. Menacing riffs, pummeling percussion, and some of the most guttural growls heard in a long time can be heard on tracks to mellow out after a few years—especially the heavier ilk—yet these troopers have gotten in touch with their inner decay and are still pumping out depraved death metal (like "Horns of Eradication" and "Thorns of Everlasting Persecution") with the vigor of younger bands half their age. If you hate organized religion and love the sounds of punishing death metal, Incantation's latest will not disappoint. www.olympicrecordings.com

-Mike SOS



SOME RECORDS

SOME RECORDS
The debut release on Some Records by this L.A. quintet is an EP that will be hard to remove from your stereo. With slow, trippy beats and celestial guitars, Innaway weaves a gossamer fabric that ingrains itself on your subconscious. I listened to this disc four times through before I realized that there are only three songs on it. The spacey music is often similar to The Mars Volta when The up a rabid fan base that raves about the live gigs on the group's Website. There is also a video for the single "Rise" on this EP, but what we really need is the full-length disc from this inspiring outfit. Hopefully I won't have to repeat the EP too many more times, as the group has its full-length album scheduled for a summer release. -Dug



JAMES LABRIE ELEMENTS OF PERSUASION INSIDE OUT MUSIC

INSIDE OUT MUSIC
For starters, some of the coolest cover art I have ever seen.
Creepy, meaningful, slightly abstract, and artistic. Nice. I hope I feel the same about the music. Choppy and annoying at first, I was hoping that it would evolve into something that I'd enjoy—and that does happen at times throughout the album. I liked certain songs unexplainable songs from the '80s). There are some very interesting and complicated things going on in this music, mostly (at least it sounds like) additional drum lines done by machines and synthesizers/mixers. Its very European in that aspect but I wouldn't

by machines and synthesizers/mixers. Its very European in that aspect, but I wouldn't categorize and limit it to just that. This album is better than just another bunch of Europeans and machines, although the lyrics are slightly cheesy. -Thomas Murray



SUGAR HOOKER

Although this is blatant rocker-chick pop, there is something very pleasing about the way JERRA is able to make tightly-constructed pop ditties. She is able to put in unexpected changes during three-

minute songs with a lot of playful guitar riffs, as well as more typical aggressive punk power chords. The best part, however, is the she sings, "I remember the first time / My eyes looked and my hands moved slow! I snuck to see him in the night / Atari 2600 / My sister had the moves she wouldn't show me / But Atari wanted one of her and wanted none of me." The potential here is driven by humor and tight songwriting skills. For more info visit lears come. Nothers to Gomes It. and tight songwriting skills. For more info, visit jerra.com -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



KANDA ALL THE GOOD MEETINGS ARE TAKEN **BOP TART**

You melt the arctic / Every time you dance." Aw, shucks, do you mean it? This is probably the cutest album released thus far in 2005. Kanda remind me of what Figurine would sound like if they didn't hold back on their songwriting to make room for pointless instrumental breaks. This is electro pop at its finest, folks. Sweet fernale vocals accompanied by fruity loops beats and that kind of computer-frosted sound that The Postal Service made popular.



KASABIAN SELF-TITLED RCA RECORDS

The debut full-length U.S. release of this English quartet's album comes off like a specter with a shotgun. The band mixes its vaguely prog-rock sound with a hard-edged rock ethic à la early Korn and comes off with a strangely appealing new genre that often sounds a bit like '80s house music. Cover art on the album consists of a

mysteriously masked face and lots of black. The sepia-toned band photos on the CD sleeve show four scruffy rockers who look like they might be the Dalton gang come back from the dead. These rogues will be touring the U.S. with Oasis in September, and if the brilliant music on this disc ends up sounding the same at a live right his hand could notify the label. The same at a live right his hand could notify the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. The same at a live right his hand could not live the label. the same at a live gig, this band could easily steal the show. This is a great album. Find it and turn it way the hell up. -Dug



KATY MAE THREE-SONG SAMPLER SELF-RELEASED

Busting out of Brooklyn with a alternative country twang, Katy Mae call their brand of no-frills rock 'n' roll jangle the sounds of New American Traditionalists, and the description is quite fitting. With nods to Wilco, Jayhawks, and The Web, this trio pull no punches and hit harder than they have to, sounding as if they drink and party twice as hard. If that's not a recipe for a down-home rockin' time, then what is? Combining a Texas two-step with a hard-rock crunch, roised to bring the sounds of smallbows houstcake his the kind.

Katy Mae is a band poised to bring the sounds of smalltown heartache to the big city. www.katymaemusic.com -Mike SOS



KRYOBURN **ENIGMATIC EXISTENCE** CANDLELIGHT

Pummeling through your speakers, Kryoburn is a metal outfit hailing from New Mexico whose machine-like precision and enraged musical and vocal rants should garnish the group a good

enraged musical and vocal rants should garnish the group a good share of the Pantera and Fear Factory fan base. Combining atmospheric passages with vulgar displays of digital aggression, tracks like "Singularity" and "Against My Evil" follow the Burton C. Bell-meets-Devin Townsend blueprint to a T. While ENIGMATIC EXISTENCE ultimately searches for its own identity while playing out to be way over-reflected and programmed, there's a plethora of hostility on this disc that can easily sidestep all of the collection's shortcomings and appeal to metalheads eager to let off some industrial-sized steam. www.krvoburn.net -Mike SOS



LIFE IN PICTURES BY THE SIGN OF THE SPYGLASS CLOCKWORK RECORDINGS/PLUTO RECORDS

This screamo band has a hard rock or even metal edge to its hardcore music. The band "plans to tour relentlessly" (says its press sheet). "Relentlessly" I have no doubt about, as that is the same approach the band takes to the songs on this album, raising questions on whather it is playing music or beating it into questions on whether it is playing music or beating it into submission. The rhythms are early Metallica, the leads are hard rock, and the vocals are grindcore. -Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



LIFEND **INNERSCARS CRUZ DEL SUR**

Lifend mix the beauty of Lacuna Coil with the brutality of Dimmu Borgir, creating a virtual metal melting pot on INNERSCARS, the outfit's debut. Descending from the Swedish metal contingent, this Italian quintet boast female vocals, thunderous death-metal riffs, poundful bothboard evaluations.

powerful keyboard overlays, and even stretch the metal genre by implementing a curveball in the form of a saxophone. Experimenting within the extreme metal genre, Lifend's influences range everywhere from Opeth to Cradle of Filth, giving its brand of operatic death metal a broad scope that other bands can only be envious of. Nine tracks of pristine acoustics and programmed beats intertwined with bellicose death-metal bellowing, INNERSCARS is the amalgamation of all of your favorite European metal acts rolled into one.



THE PERFECT MOMENT **METAL BLADE**

Hailing from Texas, Losa is a mighty quintet whose unique approach to metalcore breathes new life into the saturated genre.

THE PERFECT MOMENT is as caustic, spastic, frenetic, and

THE PERFECT MOMENT is as caustic, spastic, frenetic, and powerful as anything currently ruling the market, as they tastefully extract pieces of Slipknot, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Candiria, Mastodon, Tool, and Cradle of Filth to comprise a hulking beast capable of immense damage. Crushingly heavy, tracks like the schizophrenic "The Witness's Account" and the sludgy death groove of "One Day, All Eyes Went Dim" entangle your ears in a web of moody, brooding carnage; while the creeping din made by "From the Ashes of Infancy" is a sinewy slobberknocker. One of the best things about THE PERFECT MOMENT is its non-stop barrage of music, as the tracks run into each other without a chance to catch your breath, making this disc sound organically relentless. Intriguing, enlightening, and distinctive, Losa's latest release is explosive and necessary listening to those who strive for adventure. www.metalblade.com -Mike SOS



LOST CITY ANGELS BROKEN WORD STAY GOLD RECORDS/UNIVERSAL

is one of the best new albums I've heard this year. BROKEN WORLD is Lost City Angels' sophomore release and is filled with hardcore/punk music with some underlying emotion and outrage. Don't you dare try to classify these Boston boys as an emo band—

they don't even come close. These guys understand the true meaning of loss, as they sing for the memories of friends who have passed on during the making of this album. Here are a few tracks off of BROKEN WORLD I think you should check out: "Pretty War" for all you hardcore/punk fans, "Broken World" if you'd like one bitchen song stuck in your head for a week or two, and "Lips" if you're trying to get laid. The last is one beautiful song. I bet it even got a few hand members some action. By the way lost City Angels cell are it even got a few band members some action. By the way, Lost City Angels, call me.



LOVEDRUG
PRETEND YOU'RE ALIVE
THE MILITIA GROUP

The debut full-length release from Ohio-based indie quartet Lovedrug is a dramatic, life-altering experience. Well, maybe the Lovedrug is a dramatic, life-altering experience. Well, maybe the CD won't cure cancer or feed the starving masses, but it does deliver one of the finest epic sounds of the new millennium. With desperately intense melodies driven by powerful drumming, ethereal guitars, and a perfectly injected piano, this band has hit upon a sound that will make you believe it is the great arena band that somehow slipped your notice. The band claims its music is a blend of "art and accessibility," which is a pretty accurate description of a prog band that rocks hard enough to draw comparisons with Queen. This is a terrific album from one of the best new groups around. Don't miss it. -Dug

new groups around. Don't miss it. -Dug



MAD HAMPSTER SQUALOR TOWN SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED

NYC trio Mad Hampster take their gas-huffing riffs of rage out of the smoky garage and on to the 10-track SQUALOR TOWN. With a sound comparable to Fireball Ministry meets Fu Manchu at a Burning Brides show, the slacker shuffle of "Shoe Box" or the syrupy stoner rock of "Top Erom Ekoms" (read it backwards) are only a few of the tasty selections on this band's menu, which bounces with relative ease from minimalist garage rock to crossover SoCal punk to full-on rawk. So go ahead, get a load on and get your rocks off with Mad Hampster.

-Mike SOS



MAN IN GRAY/UNSACRED HEARTS SPLIT :

SERIOUS BUSINESS

SERIOUS BUSINESS
Is Brooklyn burning? Well, after a close listen of two of the borough's stalwart acts, where there's smoke, there's bound to be fire—and both Man in Gray and Unsacred Hearts bring their own unique kindling their split-CD release. Up first, the jagged, female-fronted Man in Gray's two tracks evoke Blondie and Yeah Yeah Yeahs while throwing the rawk afterburner on full throttle. Next come the subversively clever Unsacred Hearts, whose stream-of-consciousness vocal delivery fits perfectly with the atomic musical backdrop, making for a listen as captivating as reading Hemingway for the first time. Despite the hoopla over Brooklyn and its music scene, these two bands are bands you'll actually respect yourself in the morning for liking. This split is a great pick-up for the indie-rock mogul in you. www.seriousbusinessrecords.com

-Mike SOS



MANDA AND THE MARBLES ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES ADDISON

ADDISON
Despite my inclination towards more technically and lyrically challenging material, I couldn't help but tap my foot to ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES whilst trying to suppress the urge to dance. This is high-energy power pop, the punk-rock grime polished away by lilting keyboards and Manda Marbles's sweet but forceful voice, with the spirit and vigor of fun, Ramones-style punk in full force. As a part of the resurgence of new wave, Manda and the Marbles tread dangerous ground, resurrecting the sound and kitsch of the '80s—but only the parts we want or need to remember, fundamentals: simple but compelling songs that demand some sort of movement that resembles dancing from the listener. ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES is by no means a work of art, but I doubt that's what Manda and the Marbles set out to accomplish. Instead, they've made a simple but enthusiastic foray into pop music, reminding us, perhaps a little too robustly, that sometimes music ought to be just about having fun. -Matt Wallace



MARDUK PLAGUE ANGEL

War-mongering Swedish troupe Marduk return with PLAGUE ANGEL, an 11-track display of this veteran outfit of black metal's ANGEL, an 11-track display of this veteran outfit of black metals wares. Blindingly fast drums pervade tracks like "Perish in Flames", while the slower, crushing "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" elicits a foreboding feeling much like the works of Dimmu Borgir or Cradle of Filth. Sonically challenging, epically written, and bitterly heavy, Marduk may have only one original member left in the fold, but the group's savage tenacity and innate ability to capture aural apocalypse catapults them head and shoulders above any number of their peers. PLAGUE ANGEL will not the previous performs match, wave candicipate continue on the

disappoint any fan who craves extreme metal. www.candlelightrecording.co.uk



MERKABAH MFRKABAH SELF-RELEASED

Merkabah is an outfit from Queens whose three-track release is a bit under-produced but does show some signs of potential. The hybrid mix of metal displayed by this quartet showcases a young band trying to establish an identity of its own while paying homage to its influences. Dollops of old-school metal, emotive hard rock, and the sounds of West Coast metal you'd see at the

Warped Tour get placed into a blender, and guitar-driven, dramatically-written music comes out. With the right amount of seasoning and experience, Merkabah could become a force to watch out for. www.merkabahny.com -Mike SOS



MESMER MACHINE STEREO SYSTEM TEST RECORD MADROAD/CATHOUSE

The obviously U2-influenced moods and vocals with atmospheric melodic guitars mixed with a bit of psychedelic droning epitomize this record. Like many bands, Mesmer Machine are simply attempting to rehash the successful formulas of the past. However, their influences are almost TOO obvious—so obvious, in fact, that while listening one must ask, overdone, the vocals are clearly Bono rip-offs, and the tracks lack any moments of glory. After a few listens, it isn't a surprise that no songs remain in your head. If that isn't a sign of a disappointing album, I don't know what is. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.









Over Spring as Super



METAL CHURCH THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD SPV RECORDINGS

SPV RECORDINGS
These guys lurked onto the metal scene in the '80s and have yet to realize that 20 years have past. Still rocking leather jackets and long, untamed, '80s-like hair, the new—that's right: new—Metal Church album, THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD, is a dismal attempt to hold on to their treasured memories of the '80s metal lifestyle. Think of a softer, less creative, dumbed-down version of any old-school Iron Maiden album, and that's basically you're life is a struggle...Just rid yourself of torment / And hit the road." Need I say more? Guitar riffs I've heard in every garage-based, amateur, metal band; and guitar solos that would make any power metal fan yawn at. I would rate this album up there with the William Hung Christmas album. It's amusing, but that's about it.

-Courtney Strain

-Courtney Strain



MILTON AND THE DEVILS PARTY WHAT IS ALL THIS SWEET WORK WORTH? SELF RELEASED

SELF RELEASED
Fronted by two English professors from Widener University in Philadelphia, Milton and the Devils Party (the name purloined from a line by William Blake (hence the AWOL apostrophe)) write careful, intelligent lyrics and combine them with classic (rock and literature) influences and sensibilities. Don't dismiss the band, however, because of their academic pedigree. A background in the canon of English literature might help you catch all the allusions to Milton, Poe, Blake, and others, but this is by no means necessary. Similarly, familiarity with their musical influences (The Clash, The Kinks, Elvis Costello) is recommended but not necessary. Both promising and erudite, WHAT IS ALL THIS SWEET WORK WORTH demands more attention than the average pop album to be fully appreciated

-Matt Wallace

-Matt Wallace



MOTIONLESS MOTIONLESS SELF RELEASED

SELF RELEASED

This is a surprisingly well-recorded record, considering that the band is without a record label. Then again, with members from As I Lay Dying, Falling Aspirations, Convicted, Whatever it Takes and Blackletter Days, you realize that these boys might know a thing or two about how to get an album done. What makes this contain one songwriter, but four. Each member of this group contributes and makes it something bigger and better than it would have been without them. If you're into bouncy pop-punk, you'll love it! Otherwise, this album probably isn't for you.



MUNKEY JUICE MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE: "MOSCOW" CHOOSE TO LOSE RECORDS

Munkey Juice is an independent outfit (they are Choose to Lose Records) that has been doing it on their own now for 10 years. Moscow is the band's seventh album. Lead by the Heise brothers, Munkey Juice reminds me of The Flaming Lips without all the production and strained voices, cool songs played well with neat instruments placed where needed and great pop ideas. The music is rock, raw, and ultra hip. MOSCOW is a double-disc, 24 songs and not one bad one in the bunch. All the Munkey Juice music, including MOSCOW, is available at www.munkeyjuice.net. Munkey Juice are American rock 'n' roll heroes. The lesson is that it can be done from your bedroom. Munkey Juice, I love you, and I love MOSCOW. I can not stop listening. Munkey Juice rule. -H. Barry Zimmerman



MUTANT PRESS SLAVE TO FASHION 500 POUND WEASEL RECORDS

Angry, rugged hard-rock guitar and simple, direct drum rhythms are the background for Jerome T. Youngman's songs. The numbers come in variety of styles: depressed ("Black Hole Calling"), defiantly individualist ("Slave to Fashion"), and just plain zany ("Pants on Fire"). A cover of Bob Dylaris "Blowin' in the Wind" is thrown in for good measure. Pick this up, because the eyes of your friends. www.geocities.com/mutantpress2002



NEVER ENOUGH DEAD SET ON DESTRUCTION ORGANIZED CRIME

Chronicling this Baltimore outfit's two years in the world of hardcore, this 27-track collection neatly places all of Never Enough's recorded works with some live tracks and six new songs for kids to lose their minds to. Solid, chugging riffs with a NYHC backbone and a raspy vocal that accentuates the music, DEAD SET ON DESTRUCTION displays a band who can attack hardcore band, Never Enough take pages from the books of bands like Sick of It All, Poison Idea, and other old-schoolers and give the youth of today a vibrant and volatile lesson in hardcore. www.organizedcrimerecords.com

-Mike SOS



NEW BRUTALISM 2001-2003 LUJO RECORDS

LUJO RECORDS
"What the fuck is this crap?" was the first thing that popped into my mind when I put this CD into my CD player and gave it a go. I decided that perhaps I was being unfair and did a little bit of research on the band, and what I found was rather surprising. This band made their own instruments. Pretty cool, huh? Guess what they made them out of: aluminum. I guess these guys really like to recycle. With this knowledge, I gave the album another go. Although the concept behind all the songs is cool, the album itself is not. Sometimes they almost sound as if they are trying to copy Rage Against the Machine but fall very short, since it seems as if the guitar player can only play three to five chords and a few odd notes during each song. Maybe his aluminum guitar was malfunctioning.

MINI SAN BE SEE OF SEASON



NOVEMBERKILLS RUSSIAN ROULETTE HOTFOOT RECORDS

If you were curious about what youth in Iraq are listening to, apparently it is Novemberkills. New York is an international city, apparently it is Novemberkills. New York is an international city, but apparently Long Island also has a growing reputation around the world from Iraq to Japan and Germany (is that Axis connection just coincidence?). Novemberkills play run-of-the-mill hardcore-lite with particularly biting lyrics (e.g., "Why am I always wrong?"). Choirboy voices are the only distinguishing feature in this earnest but formulaic venture into "speed it up, slow it down, scream a little, smile, sneer, and snooze" territory. Maybe war-ravaged nations need to go from childish whining to tough-guy growling in the space of a few songs to express all of their uncertainty. But what angst a Long Island kid could share with an Iraqi under attack remains a mystery. -Erika Owens



OCTAVIA SPERATI WINTER ENCLOSURE CANDLELIGHT

CANDLELIGHT
Octavia Sperati is an all-female Norwegian goth-rock troupe whose 11-track disc displays mid-tempo melancholic metal that merges the wares of Lacuna Coil with Evanescence with a discernibly heavier edge, thanks to the biting guitars on tracks like "Below Zero". Even though an air of luxurious melodies via keyboards, pianos, and angelic lead vocals are apparent throughout WINTER ENCLOSURE, the band lapses into Paradise Lost-meets-My Dying Bride territory on tracks like "Icebound" and "Wasted on the Living", sinking their collective teeth into a realm heavier than that which most female bands dare to bite. If you enjoy the work of bands like The Gathering, Nightwish, etc., then Octavia Sperati is a disc worth checking out. www.candlelightrecords.co.uk -Mike SOS



ONE TORDS OUTTON A TASTE OF REVOLUTION ONEWORDSOLUTION

This five-song EP is just a taste of the thought revolution Onewordsolution wants to instigate. Battling conformity and apathy with a message and music, Onewordsolution offers songs with lyrics you can believe in and mull over. www.Onewordsolution.com -Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



ONEWORDSOLUTION WALLSWITHOUTWINDOWS DEDICATED WRECKERS

DEDICATED WRECKERS
For the most part, WALLSWITHOUTWINDOWS is full of scorching fast punk with motor-mouth vocals that (rightfully) critique American society, politics, and policy (akin to bands like Czolgosz and Molotov Cocktail, for instance). Yet, there are instances on this 16-song album where OneWordSolution stray from the norm—musically, at least—as on the opening "introduction," which is basically just some guitars with militaristic drumming; the skasoaked "Wasteland"; and the rather quirky "Nausea". Anyway, this is just my opinion, but it seems that this band is more about the politics, the music being more of a vehicle oget OneWordSolution's progressive leanings across. The valid points made in their lyrics are accompanied by various sound bites strewn throughout the record that help to convey their ideas. (The band's Website, www.onewordsolution.com, offers helpful news and information on current events, opinion essays, and more.)

Janelle Jones



OTOSCOPE PURE SPECULATION SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED
This unsigned band should talk to the people responsible for Hall and Oates. Otoscope manages to master the easy-listening sound by tastefully including gospel and keyboards, making standout, radio-friendly tracks like "Don't Go Away" and "I Saw You" perfect for anyone whose idea of an enjoyable afternoon is sitting by the bay in San Diego sipping on white wine and eating pate. A good diamond in the rough for a band that just needs a

little TLC



OUTSMARTING SIMON STAND UP STRAIGHT TRIPLE CROWN RECORDS

TRIPLE CROWN RECORDS

Out Smarting Simon's sophomore release exemplifies their musical tastes and ability. This album is more reserved in many respects than their debut release, SILENT, SOBER AND SOUND, and the production values have moved beyond living-room recordings (though there's something special about albums recorded in living rooms). OSS's sound has progressed from post-emo-angst to an all-encompassing straight-ahead indie sound. With skillfully-placed time changes and subtle transitions dominating the composition, the release smoothly shifts styles while retaining cohesiveness. Out Smarting Simon has polished off the grit and grime, refined their sound, and released an exquisite album. -Kevin Farr

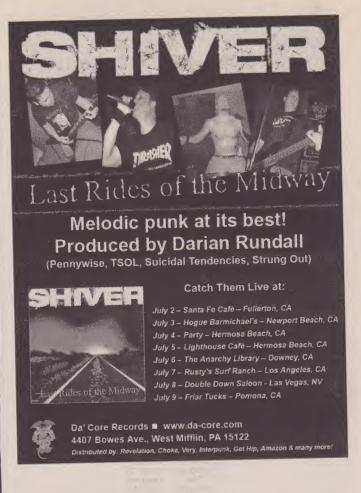
-Kevin Farr an exquisite album.



MOTEL

RA SOUNDS

MOTEL is an absolutely amazing disc. The music is Mothers-era Zappa free jazz that makes you say "goddamn." Pak is a three-piece led by guitarist/vocalist/piano player Ron Anderson. He is a total bad-ass. His vocals are animal scat and hysteric rambling madness. MOTEL is serious music. All eight songs are consistent and to the rim with substance. These songs are loaded. Pak couldn't get one more time change or brilliant passage into these songs. Highly recommended for the insane, the weird, and the adventurous. Some of my favorite titles are "The Higher the Elevation the Lesser the Vegetation", "100% Human Hair", and "Jam Jet Treatment". If you think that today's bands are boring, I dare you to buy MOTEL. Pak has made a classic disc. Get MOTEL and let your freak flag fly. -H. Barry Zimmerman





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HIREVERY



REVOLUTIONARY MIND SCIENCE CALL TO ARMS RECORDS

REVIEWS TO TO 1

The title of this CD does not fit the music at all. Parson claim they are looking for global domination, but as far as I'm concerned, they late looking for global domination, but as far as I'm concerned, they have a long way to go. The poorly-recorded CD has weak vocals covered by music that sounds muffled and distorted. The melodies don't do much but make you feel as though you are in a bad 1980s B-movie or possibly listening to a wannabe power-ballad hair band. If they want to really be revolutionary, Parson should try more than plucking on the electric guitar and by writing lyrics more thought-provoking than "We'll drink ourselves into oblivion." -Aimee Curran



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PEACE CORP & GEORGE FRYER COMBINATION MEOW SALIH RECORDS

"After playing 1,000 shows / Peace corps finally broke up" is what we're greeted with at the beginning of MEOW, the fabulous joint effort of Peace Corp and The George Fryer Combination. This album is screaming with the sounds of '90s indie-rock geniuses like Pavement and Beulah. But with the addition of added percuspillary and assented Latin influences the listoger is treated with a feasiling.

sound presented in an unfamiliar way. It's exciting...but only for the first five or six songs. The album slowly gets bogged down with redundancy and does not retain the charm of the opening few tracks. Fans of Blur, Beulah, and Elf Power might enjoy this album.



PICASTRO POLYVINYL RECORDS

Throughout METAL CARES are dark, minimal musings certain of creating a somber mood with every listen. The constant cello prolongs the sadness throughout, while guitar picking helps include

moments of positivity and hope in the endless pain of life; and the clunky, somewhat dead piano is agonizing in its own mortality. The beautifully depressing vocals of Liz Hysen are at the forefront of the more powerful due to its PERFECT delivery. For more info, please visit polyvinylrecords.com. And remember, kids, knowing is half the battle! Norberto Gomez, Jr.



POLYSICS OR DIE!!!! TOFU RECORDS

Genius! Genius! I thought Japan had exhausted its musical outlet with amazing release from Cornelius, Ghosts, and musical outlet with amazing release from Cornelius, Ghosts, and Melt Banana, but apparently there is still much more to offer. Polysics combine the spirituality of Devo with some of the danciest and most innovative song arrangements that I've heard in quite a while. Imagine a techno circus filled with battling electric guitars and one extremely coked-up drummer. Once you're in the circus, put on a bear suit and juggle some chainsaws. Then you'll begin to get a bit closer to the insanity that is this band. Fans of Blood Brothers, Beep Beep, Melt Banana, and Ex-models will go to hell and back for this one. Don't miss out on the techno circus! -Zac



PURE SWEET HELL THE VOYUERS OF UTTER DESTRUCTION AS BEAUTY CRASH

Ambient and ambitious, Pure Sweet Hell is a three-man project Ambient and ambitious, Pure Sweet Hell is a three-man project devised by Van Williams, drummer of Seattle's Nevermore, as a more artistic and experimental metal endeavor than his day job. On this 13-track release, there seems to be a lot of abstract ideas floating around without much resolution, making THE VOYEURS OF UTTER DESTRUCTION AS BEAUTY sound a bit half-baked.

While many of the riffs (such as the monster runs in "Hanglire" and the slow crunch of "The Killers") are crisp and commanding the compositions throughout tood to mendate.

"The Killers") are crisp and commanding, the compositions throughout tend to meander and lack definitive closure. Perhaps that is what the band intended, but from a listener's standpoint Pure Sweet Hell's latest release, despite its superfluous creativity and the adventurous spirit, employs the feel of doing a jigsaw puzzle with a few pieces missing.



RAGING SPEEDHORN HOW THE GREAT HAVE FALLEN

SPV
Heroes for some time in England, Raging Speedhorn's latest vitriolic assault on your eardrums is now (thankfully) available in America. The brutal crew's latest seething soundtrack, HOW THE GREAT HAVE FALLEN, has been unleashed and is primed to kick your ass seven ways to Sunday. The 10-track display of, devastation pounded out by these purveyors of punishment meld uniquely and utterly relentless sound. Using a two-man growl and backed by an explosive band whose mission is to destroy all in its path, songs like the crushing "Dead Man Walking" sounds like Superjoint Ritual banging heads with Hatebreed, while the sinister groove of "Fuck You Pay Me" slams your skull against the concrete without remorse. If you're looking for a heavy band that incorporates Sabbath, Slipknot, and beatdown hardcore in its blend of merciless metal, rejoice, as your band has arrived.



REEL BIG FISH WE'RE NOT HAPPY 'TIL YOU'RE NOT HAPPY MOJO/JIVE RECORDS

The fifth full-length release from these third-wave ska veterans is a depreciating and slightly poignant album that brings the band's humor into line with some hard-earned lessons about the music business. Frontman Aarron Barrett describes it well: "I think the theme is, 'Fuck this shif. Fuck you, fuck the music business. I quit."

while the sextet bounces and rocks its way through ironic tunes like, "Don't Start a Band", "We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful", and "One Hit Wonderful", it's easy to see how RBF has sold over a million albums. Though their signature ska sound is getting a bit tired, there isn't a band that merges the driving guitar rock and horns better. Unfortunately, the market for ska has been shrinking, but this is one of RBF's best albums. -Dug



DEAD END STREET GO-KART

RIFU, a Norwegian hardcore punk band unafraid to showcase political slants and sociological rants via their crunchy, imminent music, liberally borrows from bands like Poison Idea, Refused, Black Flag, and any band that ever gave the world the finger. Fanning the flames of revolution with potent powder-keg numbers (like the bass-driven crush of "Destroy the Machines" and the empowering staccato rhythm of "Moral Masturbation"), RIFU bear the distinction of being a unit that can arouse both your savage side in the pit and your intellectual side by dropping some anti-establishment knowledge. If you're in tune with

intellectual side by dropping some anti-establishment knowledge. If you're in tune with bands like Amen, System of a Down, Kill Your Idols, and other like-minded outfits, chances are DEAD END STREET will appeal to you and your anarchistic side. www.gokartrecords.com -Mike SOS



BIKEN RIKEN SELF-RELEASED

What to say about Riken that won't get my ass kicked by my buddy at school who handed me this CD? The singer can sing very well for the style he chooses (which happens to be that oh-so-popular nasal pop-punk way of singing), and the band has a lot of potential to be the next Incubus. But there are two things Riken really need learn that verses and choruses are labeled differently because they are SUPPOSED to be different. If you can't figure out how to do this on your own, I'm sure there are many if you happen to pass me in the halls, don't be angry: this is me being my nicest.



RUN AWAY FROM THE HUMANS WE EXIST EXPEDITION ZERO ONE ONE

EXPEDITION ZERO ONE ONE

Upon reading up on Run Away from the Humans (RAFTH), the first thing that stuck out was songwriter Jason McBride's Duling background. This techno background made me a little apprehensive about listening to some club beat mix CD, but this EP was a pleasant surprise. The real wonder of RAFTH is the collaboration of McBride, guitarist Marc Chartier, and drummer abilities and affinities to the table to create a moving amalgamation. WE EXIST begins with a soothing but unbeat sound that is bolstered by nostaldic lyrics. As the CD

with a soothing but upbeat sound that is bolstered by nostalgic lyrics. As the CD progresses, it becomes more somber, till it closes with a techy computer voice chanting, we exist." RAFTH are able to combine the best elements of often disparate genres into a really enchanting and kinetic mix. -Erika Owens



SELF-RELEASED

Pristine and refined, Seer is a Long Island rock outfit whose foursong endeavor is heavily influenced by Brit rock such as Pink Floyd, Radiohead, Muse, and Ash. With a shimmering lead vocal in front of the textured amplification, Seer shift between sinewy rhythms and sonic symphonic passages with grace and ease, (especially on "Watching the Sidewalks"). Creating an elaborate aura via well-manipulated guitar sounds and rounding it out by hypnotic bass and drums, Seer's output merges elegance and agony in a way that is both engaging and enlightening. www.seerband.com -Mike SOS



SELF AGAINST CITY TAKE IT HOW YOU WANT IT RUSHMORE RECORDS

RUSHMORE RECORDS
The first band to sign with new label Rushmore Records is a melodic rock quintet from Sacramento with a sound heavily influenced by bands like Oasis and Jimmy Eat World. This six-song EP is packed with sing-along choruses, catchy hooks, and a bright, explosive sound that instantly makes you think you've heard this band before. Jon Temkins's urgent lead vocals are backed nicely by those from Linkin Park but on a much more controlled and melodic level. The band's clean instrumental sound is a breath of fresh air in these days of distortion and overkill. Self Against City is a very talented band that needs to follow up with its full-length disc as soon as possible.



SHIRAGIRL NOT RELEASED IN STORES SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED
Yes! I love this album. Electro-rock is the next big thing. Who can say differently, with bands like The Transplants out there hitting it big? The two girls who make up Shiragirl make some killer fucking music—and NOT RELEASED IN STORES is proof. Although this band can easily be classified as electro-punk, the music is also filled with elements of rap (hey, don't hate); and on one of the tracks there happens to be a special guest. What guest? Well, pick up their album NOT RELEASED IN STORES this year at Warped Tour and listen to it and figure out whom the guest is yourself! I'm not going to tell you everything, but I will give you a tip on where you can pick up this album: check out the Girl Stage at Warped Tour, also known as the Shiragirl stage. "Shiragirl could not get any hotter" is damn right. Don't fucking forget it!

-Manda-Dex-Punk



SHORTIE WITHOUT A PROMISE EARACHE RECORDS

EARACHE RECORDS
Proclaiming themselves as the "bridge between heavy metal and pop," these northern California natives are pushing and shoving their way to national recognition. Opening for acts such as Papa Roach, Adema, and Soulfly, the popularity of Shortie is surely to skyrocket to an astronomical level, and soon. WITHOUT A PROMISE is catchy but not annoying, hard-rocking but innovative.

Heartfelt and serious, this album should be included in every rocker's collection. For fans of Papa Roach, Adema, Trust Company, and like bands, WITHOUT A PROMISE should fit nicely. Although bands can be cocky and incorrect, these Sacramento rockers were dead on., with their heavy-metal riffs and catchy pop lyrics. Definitely a band to look out for in the future.

-Courtney Strain -Courtney Strain



SHOWBREAD NO SIR, NIHILISM IS NOT PRACTICAL TOOTH AND NAIL

Songwriting can be tough. Lyricists get criticized for dumbing concepts down and using clichés, but they also have to be careful not to put off their audience by talking above them. They are vocally more praisey than most other mainstream punk artists, but the surprises do not end there. A quick look at the song titles alone reveals allusions to Sylvia Plath, Kafka, and Judas. "Your eulogy is like poetry" is an ant comparison to their

Judgas. "Your eulogy is like poetry" is an apt comparison to their songs, which have typical blood/gore/death motifs but are sung in a rigid, poetic meter. From the liberal-arts ideals to the band being clad in a uniform of black and red, the fact that The Blood Brothers have a Christian counterpart is actually the least surprising aspect of Showbread. -Erika Owens



SIGNS OF COLLAPSE WEEP FOR THE LIVES YOUR WISHES NEVER LED

WEEP FOR THE LIVES YOUR WISHES NEVER LED SAW HER GHOST RECORDS

Metalcore straight out of the Motor City that will make your skin crawl—but in a way that you'll masochistically like. The song titles alone are enough to make me love this album: "And You Thought This Last Bullet Was for Me", "Electronic Music Is for Drug Addicts and Hippies", "Don't Smile While You Play Because It's Really Pissing Me Off" (the last being my favorite title and sear-pounding guitars and insane drums, the kind that you would expect to hear at the gates of hell. Definitely metalcore at its finest.

-Courtney Strain

-Courtney Strain



SIRENIA AN ELIXIR FOR EXISTENCE NAPALM

Hot on the heels of bands like Nightwish and Lacuna Coil, Sirenia's AN ELIXIR FOR EXISTENCE take the female-fronted Sirenia's AN ELIXIR FOR EXISTENCE take the female-fronted gothic metal approach. Complete with symphonic choruses, growling male utterances, angelic female throatwork, and the kind of keyboard overlays and rhythmic chugging you'd find only in this genre of metal, Sirenia's nine-track dish isn't breaking any new ground, but it does provide an ample alternative to the aforementioned outfits. If you dig lush arrangements with a goth-metal flare, this disc will suit you just fine.

Www.napalmrecords.com -Mike SOS



SLOW MOTION APOCALYPSE
MY OWN PRIVATE ARMAGEDDON TRIBUNAL RECORDS

Black metal is back, and it's going to kick your ass! And the perpetrator? Slow Motion's newest album. Dark, heavy, intense

perpetrator? Slow Motion's newest album. Dark, neavy, intense yrics and even more intense instrumentation gives this album a never-ending appeal. The creative guitar solos almost remind me of something from an action or a zombie movie. Good stuff. This quintet of Italian metalheads are definitely on top of their game. This album is creative, innovative, and interesting, something you want to listen to over and over. There is so much going on in every song that it would take many runthroughs to fully hear everything. In an age when the majority of people's attention spans are so short, this album is a relief to boring, monotonous albums of the past. Something to enjoy and rock out to. -Courtney Strain



SO MANY DYNAMOS WHEN I EXPLODE SKROCKI RECORDS

SKROCKI RECORDS

This is an explosive pop album filled with intricate, explosive drumming (à la Dismemberment Plan), where you swear it's a drum machine; a fat, pulse-driving synth acting as bass, and great stop/start guitar riffs. Altogether, it feels like you're in one giant factory. Like Dismemberment Plan, the vocals of So Many Dynamos are somewhat immature, not much different from the

whiny pop-punkers and emo geeks of today. But the vocals aren't a big deal when there is fantastic music backing it up. In the end, it all works together in a very nice way. There are many possible hits on this CD, especially the somewhat hip-hop "We Panic in a Pew". For more info, visit somanydynamos.org. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



SOCIETY 1 THE CREATION OF SOUND

EARACHE
The beauty of Earache Records's name is that they largely release albums which most people in the world would deem the cause of an actual earache—even though most metalheads find them extremely entertaining. I suppose the case is the same with the newest from Society 1. This album is the cause of an actual earache for some, I'm sure, but for me it's an extreme ride through the realm of heavy metal. THE CREATION OF SOUND is a large collection of grind metal with nu-metal influences that I'm sure many are happy were part of the creation. The tracks follow along with crunchy riffing and insane vocals courtesy of Dirt, Preston, Sin, and Matt "the Lord" Zane (I didn't know the Lord was back on Earth already!). "Now let me live / So I can kill" screams Zane in "Let Me Live". Please don't kill me!

-Zac



SPACEHORSE GRAVITY

As GBH sagaciously states: "It's a race against time." San

As GBH sagaciously states: "It's a race against time." San Diego's Spacehorse adhere to that mantra, as they spout out nine blistering hard-core punk tracks in a manic 14-and-a-half minutes. The music is fast (duh) and frantic, with an inescapable sense of immediacy. Also adding to this feel is the frenzied, almost paranoid vocals. Some songs (like opener "China's Burning") recall the greatness of T.S.O.L. (and I say this not because they use the term "superficial love" on the record); and on the phenomenal finale, "Hang Your Child", they conjure thoughts of the sorely-missed Reagan Squad with their undeniable vigor and (of course) that inherent urgency and tension (but this totally has better production quality!). I hate mentioning this, but in this instance it seems unavoidable, because the bands these guys have played in before (Heroin, Clikatat Ikatowi, Camera Obscura) will certainly have some people's mouths watering. -Janelle Jones







SELF-TITLED VISITING HOURS RECORDS

Very eclectic indie rock album from our friends at Visiting Hours Records. With plenty of acoustic guitar, mid-tempo drums, and keyboard tracks, Suit of Lights has created a very easy-to-listen-to rock record. My only real complaint is that the vocals seem very monotonous by the end of the album. The singer doesn't really have a huge range to play with. The album is worth a listen or two if you're into generic indie rock.



SUNDAYRUNNERS SUNDAYRUNNERS MACHINE RECORDS

With the coastal motif in lyrics like "After all the birds have left the beach / You have to swim alone" coupled with a safe, engaging indie-pop sound, it's little wonder that the song "Memories Left at Sea" from SundayRunners' self-titled album appeared on an episode of Fox's vapid but wildly popular show THE OC. Subtle flourishes and satisfying hooks abound, and minute details set SundayRunners apart (however slightly) from their less-creative colleagues in the vast but shallow ocean of modern independent music (especially on standout tracks like "Half my Height", which evokes The Pixies without sounding derivative). Their influences may be largely contemporary and on first listen they may sound indistinguishable from other bands whored by THE OC, but if you have the time, SundayRunners are worth more than a passive listen. -Matt Wallace



TARANTULA HAWK TARANTULA HAWK LIFE IS ABUSE RECORDS

Why? This is my initial reaction, for many reasons, to Tarantula Hawk's self-titled debut album. First, this is their debut album,

Hawk's self-titled debut album. First, this is their debut album, released in 1999, and they have since recorded and released as sophomore album and are in the process of writing their third. Secondly, I am perplexed because it sounds like the Halloween soundtrack my mother plays when she hands out candy to trick-or-treaters every year. Having said that, I can't say this album is all that bad. There are some interesting parts...but it's all instrumental. My idea of why instrumental music still exists today is to shake the booty, and Tarantula Hawk is not booty-shaking music. A more accurate description would be elevator music at the Addams' manor. If you're into goth instrumental, it's the perfect album; if you're not, this is not an album I would recommend.



THE ACADEMY IS... ALMOST HERE FUELED BY RAMEN

The debut full-length release from this Chicago-based quintet is a hard-rocking bit of melodic ear candy that brings to mind music such as My Chemical Romance and Taking Back Sunday. While

such as My Chemical Romance and Taking Back Sunday. While Fueled by Ramen might have one of the most talented and longest lists of artists in the country, the label does pay attention to its newest bands and does a good job of hooking the bands up with label tours. A case in point would be the recent tour linking The Academy Is... with talented veterans Fall Out Boy, Midtown, Silverstein, and Gym Class Heroes. This Illinois quintet has the looks, the sound, and the energy to become one of the premier and ubiquitous "teen" bands like Rx Bandits that pack all-ages show across the country. With a label like FBR paving the way, it won't be long until these guys are headliners.

-Dug



THE ANCIENT ENEMY THE ANCIENT ENEMY SELF-RELEASED

Long Island's industrial-strength metal troupe The Ancient Enemy play the kind of depraved music that fans of Slipknot and Ministry can enjoy, as the band's blood-curdling vocal screams and heavy-handed guitar riffs are fueled with samples and sound clips, accentuating the overall ominous effect that this two-track sampler creates. Chances are that if you shop at Hot Topic, have multiple piercings, and are a purveyor of punishing metal, The Ancient Enemy is right up your alley. www.theancientenemy.net -Mike SOS



THE AUBURN SYSTEM

FIVE POINT
Oh yeah. Conjuring pleasant thoughts of the masters of seamlessly melding death metal, hardcore, and grind, Morse Code Heartbeat and Premonitions of War, The Auburn System are impressive on this five-song, self-titled EP, to say the least. With a plethora of unexpected and welcome time changes (ranging from excessive speed to a wee bit sludgy), top-notch low and deep, growled. vocals, heavy and inventive riffs, stellar drum work (check out "Old Man on the Mountain" for a nice little taste), and massive and pummeling bass, truly, there's not much to nit-pick here. Play this motherfucker loudæand often.

-Janelle Jones



THE BASEBALL FURIES **BIG NECK RECORDS**

Odie, Styles, Hollywood, and Dapper—a.k.a. The Baseball Furies (who got their name from the cult gang flick THE WARRIORS)—is doing a killer balls and guts version of New York Dolls-style garage

coing a killer balls and guits version of New York Dolls-style garage rock. Not that The Baseball Furies is a rip-off act; they are not. This Buffalo, NY, group transplanted to Chicago has produced a cool, dirty, rocking sophomore disc. Some of the highlight tunes are "So Amped Up" (a tribute to the wild side), "Operational" (which contains some smoking axe work by Styles), and "No Way to Win" (a furious rocker). LET TBE isn't a perfect disc. There are some passages where Odie is wailing like a drunk on a 4 a.m. shit fit—but that's the attitude of The Baseball Furies: fucked up and ready to go. -H. Barry Zimmerman



THE DAN BAND THE DAN BAND LIVE SIDEONEDUMMY RECORDS

The Dan Band Live is a hilarious mix of classic tunes spun into a wonderful and entertaining compilation. In some cases, bands taking a comedic angle on covering top 40 hits can be annoying; however, The Dan Band manages to cover hits such as En Vogue signature "Free Your Mind" and Christina Aguillera breakout "Genie in a Bottle" in an endearing and enthralling manner with snappy vocals and upbeat tempos that can't help but put a smile on your face. They make it safe to openly like pop favorites that you would normally only listen to with headphones on.

-Aimee Curran



THE FORECAST LATE NIGHT CONVERSATION VICTORY RECORDS

VICTORY RECORDS

Straight-ahead indie rock with a country swagger in their step, The Forecast stroll to a honest beat. Lyrically simplistic and straight-forward, The Forecast is an amalgamation of previous styles. With no variance or originality, it's just an okay album. There's nothing epic or exceptional about the release. Granted, there's nothing fraudulent or disdainful, either. LATE NIGHT CONVERSATION may be just like a late-night conversation, in that you may get nothing out it, or you may awake the following morning in a contemplative daze from the night before. -Kevin Farr



THE GRAVES BROTHERS DELUXE **GOOD FORKS RECORDS**

GOOD FORKS RECORDS
From the opening guitar and drums of "About the Future", I knew I was in for a treat. Stoo Odom and the rest of The Graves Brothers Deluxe offer up some quirky and catchy punk-infused rock music. While LIGHT is mostly quirky rock with a dark tone (both thematically and musically), the band isn't afraid to change things up with the use of a saxophone. If you're looking for a consistent record, then you may be disappointed with this album, because each song sounds a bit different. But instead of this making it seem like the band has no sense of direction, the songs on LIGHT all feel like they belong together. If quirkiness is your passion, give LIGHT a listen. This album is both very atmospheric and rocking.

Dane Jackson



THE GENERATORS EXCESS BETRAYAL...AND OUR DEARLY DEPARTED FIEND MUSIC

So many times you read reviews that say "Wow, this is a great disc." Well, that's just not enough for The Generators' EXCESS BETRAYAL...AND OUR DEARLY DEPARTED. This disc was originally released in Germany in 2003. It has been remastered with five beaut trade and cridde.

originally released in Germany in 2003. It has been remastered with five bonus tracks and a video. But the main thing is the music. Los Angeles's The Generators is a well-rehearsed, outstanding band, and these songs are blueprints for American punk songwriting. "Seasoned" is the word that describes the entire project. I recommend this disc to everyone. EXCESS BETRAYAL...AND OUR DEARLY DEPARTED is a modern masterpiece that is based in punk rock but is more just a reflection of emotion and real life than a genre. That being said, wow, this is a great disc.

-H. Barry Zimmerman -H. Barry Zimmerman



THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE BEHOLD THE FUCK THUNDER THINKER THOUGHT RECORDS

THINKER THOUGHT RECORDS

If this is what fucking is supposed to sound like, it's probably a painful experience. BEHOLD THE FUCK THUNDER by whacko rock act The Great Redneck Hope is a lesson in calamitous, frightening instrumentals and eternal screaming. Oh, and some overblown song titles—"Call Me Old-fashioned, but I Think Trains Are Kick-Ass", "Are You There, God? Please Help Me Stop Masturbating", etc. See what I mean? Crazy song titles are alright. The album itself is just so hard to listen to that only the truly adventurous could survive the whole thing.



THE INTERNATIONAL PLAYBOYS

MOTRON RECORDS

The International Playboys attempt to capture the sound of those rock bands from yesteryear, and they will be proud to know that I think they succeeded with familiar tunes that make you feel as if you were listening to this band sometime in the '70s. I myself am not the biggest fan of classic rock or of bands that try to emulate it. After all, it's been done before (hence its being called "classic" rock). But if you're a fan of that, you can't go wrong with SEXIFUL. -Manda-Dex-Punk



THE EARNEST MANBOY SUITE IN E MAJOR SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED
What a waste of 15 minutes and some change. This EP by San Francisco's The John Francis & Imposters is filled with uninspired eccentric garage rock. While mostly filled with noise, at times the EP sounds like Beck. It's filled with fuzzy guitar melodies, poorly-recorded drums, and variable vocal pitches. If you like garage rock, then you'll probably enjoy this EP, but I just found it grating and annoying. On top of that, there are 12 or so unnecessary tracks of typewriter noise.

-Dane Jackson



THE LONESOME DRAGSTRIPPERS PROMODIFIED PART RECORDS

PART RECORDS
The Lonesome Dragstrippers is a three-piece psychobilly outfit straight outta Germany. It's the typical psychobilly formula: slappin' bass + metal-rockabilly guitar and straight-ahead vocals. The group has a very similar sound to that of its European neighbor Mad Sin. All together, this is a very short recording (six songs), but the length might actually help keep the listener from being drowned in a sea of monotony, since all of the songs follow the same formula. Check 'em out if you're into Mad Sin. -ADF



HE MEREDITHS A CLOSED UNIVERSE EP DEBAUCHERY RECORDS

DEBAUCHERY RECORDS
Though the band is named for guitarist and singer Joe Meredith, the best tracks on this five-song EP feature vocal harmony and counterpoint with keyboard player Jonathan York, when the vocal texture matches the lush instrumentation. On only one song does the band stray from this choral paradigm. Sweet but not saccharine, this is a collection of well-crafted, catchy pop songs that don't overstay their welcome and achieve a sense of closure—something difficult to do with an EP. These five songs left me satisfied but wanting more. Luckily, with all five members still in their early 20s, we can expect even greater things from a band that can successfully balance melody, instrumentation, and tempo without sounding imitative or overwrought. -Matt Wallace



THE MICHAEL DAVID PROJECT THE MICHAEL DAVID PROJECT ROUGE RECORDS

The Michael David Project is a Detroit outfit that is making adult-contemporary music that rings of singer/songwriter/acoustic guitar and organ groups of the '70s. The music is thoughtful and full of sweet textures and musicianship. There is no big bang, but that's not the point. Michael David has a nice voice, and he is an excellent songwriter. This debut disc is a reflective, gentle effort that wants to partner up with you on a slow moving day. There is not a weak tune on board. My pick for single is the 10CC-meets-early Grateful Dead opener "Apology". The more you listen, the more you sway along to the inspired songs on The Michael David Project's infectious disc. -H. Barry Zimmerman The Michael David Project is a Detroit outfit that is making adult-



THE NEW YORK REL-X SOLD OUT OF LOVE TKO RECORDS

Rhythmic, vibrantly dark, and melodic, this punk-rock quartet's sound is a culmination of grimy punk and bouncy four-chord progressions. Fronted by a female vocalist, The New York Rel-X are your basic punk-rock band. Three and four-chord riffs with division policy of the second sec

are your basic punk-rock band. Three- and four-chord riffs with driving solos strewn about, they are not great, just good. The hooks are catchy, but the lyrical content seems to diverge from the music. Too many songs about relationships hinder the obvious musicianship on the album. The album's titled SOLD OUT OF LOVE, and they don't vary from this theme (though it's refreshing to hear a woman profess her disgust for a significant other instead of another shitty male-dominated punk band scream about heartbreak). -Kevin Farr



THE NIGHTCRAWLERS ANGEL ALLEY
THE NIGHTCRAWLERS

THE NIGHTCRAWLERS
This band offers a two-guitar punk-rock assault with an emphasis on "rock" and leaning toward old-school punk. Independently released and featuring real independent attitude, this album (produced by Kerry Martinez of U.S. Bombs) may not kick it hard enough to make you fall in love with punk rock all over again, but it is one of the better new punk releases that I have heard. s.net -Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

www.thenightcrawlers.net



THE RED DEATH EXTERNAL FRAMES OF REFERENCE METAL BLADE

The Red Death is an upstate New York-based outfit whose 10-track debut blends the guttural growls of death metal with the soaring riffs of Swedish metal, creating yet another band in the metalcore genre. This quintet's vocal attack comes sans any clean singing (a big plus) and sounds more raw than its peers' releases, making tracks like "Aftertaste of the Emaciated" and "Silent Machines" strike harder than usual. Otherwise, The Red Death's slash-and-burn delivery, churning rhythms, staccato guitars, and impassioned screams aren't anywhere near innovative but do a cohesive and competent job in pleasing your inner headhanger www.metalblade.com Mile SOC

do a cohesive and competent job in pleasing your inner headbanger. www.metalblade.com -Mike SOS



DANGER DANGER SILENT STRANGER MISSING WORDS RECORDS

Missing World's Records) is a mature mix of punk, reggae, and old-school rock for this West Coast trio. Though the band has been

ischool rock for this West Coast tino. Inough the band has been together for some time, its sound really seems to find its footing with producer Wayne Embree's (Rx Bandits) work. The sparse instrumentation calls up comparisons with early Police. There may not be a "Roxanne"-level hit on this disc, but these guys do write some great tunes. Now is a good time to pick up the band's music form its Website before it gets nabbed by a major label and has to start charging 18 bucks an album. -Dug



THE VALLEY ARENA
TAKE COMFORT IN STRANGERS ASTRO MAGNETICS

There are moments when the CD I am reviewing feels so meaningless and lacking of anything interesting that I am actually at a loss for words. I guess this band sounds like most of the edgier pop/rock out there right now (e.g., The Used), with their power drumming and their knifey guitar riffs. The vocalist actually sings in this band, but it's nothing worth mentioning. That was hard enough. These guys blow. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



THE VAN ERMANS UNDER THE GUN BROKEN SPOKE RECORDS

BROKEN SPOKE RECORDS

The western Michigan music scene has been lying dormant lately. With all the focus on bands in and around Detroit, it's pretty easy to forget about other parts of the state. But with UNDER THE GUN, western Michigan will be back on the map. Mixed, mastered, and engineered by Royce Nunley, UNDER THE GUN is filled with 13 melody and catchy vocals, some songs even show hints of punk and a particular upstroke used for ska music. If you want to hear a very solid record, then seek out UNDER THE GUN, especially if you like music with melody and heart. Standouts include "Hey Underpants", "Double You", and "Thunder Years".

-Dane Jackson



THIS PROVIDENCE OUR WORLD'S DIVORCE ROCKETSTAR RECORDINGS

ROCKETSTAR RECORDINGS
The sophomore full-length release from this quartet of clean-cut Seattle boys is an appealing piece of emo rock for those who enjoy snippets of the Bible interspersed in their rock 'n' roll. While first and foremost a Christian band, the guys are talented musicians and make the kind of music the daring devout will latch on to. The band is clearly not a "worship band" or one of those wimpy, limp-wristed bands signed to Dove Recording but a legitimate group of rockers who could be brought home to anyone's mother. Though the band does have one of the most hideously malfunctioning Websites around, way too many video game clips, and a penchant for pink and robots, they pump out some good music. Unfortunately, the band does fall into the formula where every song could be about a girlfriend relationship or (more likely) a relationship with God. It just makes for wimpy lyrics. -Dug



THRICE
IF WE COULD ONLY SEE US NOW
ISLAND RECORDS

ISLAND RECORDS
I can't remember the last time I got a CD with a parental-advisory sticker on it. But then again, I've never received a 100-page band biography, either. Clearly, Thrice has gotten a lot of press, which they do deserve. They tour relentlessly, release regularly, and even do benefit shows for groups like the SSE. With all of that media attention, they have converted a number of fans, and this CD/DVD release is a gift for them. The CD includes nine tracks of live recordings, covers, and B-sides. "Send Me an Angel" is a prime track for any longing mix tape, but most of the other features are for fans only. The DVD includes a ton of interview footage, a few videos, and some live performances, but all of that programming is premised on the fact that the viewer actually cares how or why Thrice began. -Erika Owens



TODAY'S TOMORROW TODAY'S TOMORROW SELF-RELEASED

Recorded with producer Barrett Jones (Foo Fighters, Bush, Nirvana, etc.), TODAY'S TOMORROW sounds like throwaway Collective Soul with some emo yuck spilt on it. Today's Tomorrow (I hate that name) has elements that really rock. Sometimes the guitar work makes my big toe shoot up in my boot, but for the most part this disc is a big "so what," nice songs that could be a million other bands.

Today's Tomorrow needs to try to find their own voice. -H. Barry Zimmerman



TRIESTEARCANA

OSIRIS
There are a million different ways to separate one band from another. One way is: some bands want to make music that would be a cool disc in a cool disc collection, and some want to sound like the cool records in a cool collection. Triestearcana is all about their collection. In other words, there are lots of cool ideas on IV, but this group didn't have any of them. This Ohio two-man (plus friends) tribute-ist outfit is a combination of 1970s classic rock and 1990s Seattle rock. Lead singer Shervin Mashashfi is full of emotion and attitude, but it all sounds local in that it's just so unoriginal. And Triestearcana is my vote for worst name for a band in the history of bad rock names. IV is a waste of plastic. Common and amateurish.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



TWINEMEN SELF-RELEASED

SELF-RELEASED

This album is interesting, to say the least, with very well done female/male vocals and some very interesting woodwind parts behind them. And what's this? Do I sense political undertones in the song "I Slept Through It" (sample lyrics: "It's not my flag")? I love political music. If I had to classify this band, I'd say they were something like a hip jam band. I must admit that when I first saw this album, I thought to myself, "What the fuck am I in for?" Then, when I opened up the foldover CD case, I thought, "What? Is this going to be smooth jazz? Why is there a saxophone?" But I was wrong. This isn't smooth jazz (not that smooth jazz is bad...really), but this album is a lot better than I thought it would be. If you don't think you'd be interested in something like this, you're WRONG! -Manda-Dex-Punk



BO RECORDS AND WE'RE NOT BROKE (YET)
LEVEL PLANE RECORDS

LEVEL PLANE RECORDS

This two-disc album was released to show off what Level Plane Records has been doing since its inception. The first disc contains songs previously released by the label by such artists as A Day in Black and White, The One AM Radio, Hot Cross, Get Fucked, etc. This first disc is a great overview of the label's catalog. Although you might not like every song on the first disc (I didn't), you might just unreleased material by 14 bands—City of Caterpillar, Gods & Queens, Nixon, etc.. It's a great little treat if you find yourself loving Level Plane bands. I mean, where else would you get unreleased tracks (besides the Internet)?

-Manda-Dex-Punk

-Manda-Dex-Punk



VARIOUS ARTISTS A LITTLE BIT ME, A LITTLE BIT NEIL

A LITTLE BIT ME, A LITTLE BIT NEIL
DELIRIUM RECORDS
An indie tribute to Neil Diamond? I've never been a huge fan of tribute albums. They're mostly a large amount of bands making cover songs that sound about half as good as the original every time. This case is no dilferent, as Desperation Squad's rendition of "Brother Love's Traveling Salvation Show" is mostly a watered-down rendition of the original, and The Eddies' stab at "Sweet Caroline" just sounds like as if every part of the original song (including the drums and guitars) had smoked too many cigarettes in an attempt to sound "edgier." This is not to say the bands featured on this compilation are bad, as most have a great array of their own original material. Four Eyes and Silver Needle are two great bands; but when it comes to Neil, the job is just no good! If you hate Neil Diamond, you might want to hear these trashy versions of these songs as a cathartic release for your feelings. Other than that, send this one to the bargain bin!

-Zac one to the bargain bin!



HOW'S MY DRIVING?? VOLUME 2 SUPER SPEEDWAY MUSIC

What a hot little album I hold in my hands right now. HOW'S MY DRIVING?? VOLUME 2 is full of songs I'd be more than happy to play while driving (although I doubt that the bands on this album are the best drivers). In their song "Sex, Drugs & Alcohol", The Cliftons sing about wanting get laid and get paid; while The Resistoleros' "Heroin" is about wanting heroin. Honestly, people, how well can YOU drive while getting laid and wanting or being high on heroin? Probably not very well. Although I don't recommend carpooling with any of these bands, I do recommend you picking up the album and giving it a listen. -Manda-Dex-Punk



VARIOUS ARTISTS SUMMER SAMPLER 2004 ACTION HEIGHTS RECORDS

ACTION HEIGHTS RECORDS

Action Heights may be sending this a tad late, given that it's a 2004 sampler. Still, there's some good punk rock/emo to be had on the compilation. The Phoenix Rising put on a good, catchy show with tracks like "Mid-July" and "Awakening". The Response also come at you with poppish-punk and solid guitar drives. It's much of the same with other bands like Between Home and Serenity and Faultlings. There's prough bere for a pretty deport light. Faultlines. There's enough here for a pretty decent jolt.

-Darren Ratner



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE LIFE AND THE GAME ROCK OUT RECORDS

Rock Out Records teams up with acts on labels like Fearless and Asian Man to put out their third compilation. There's a nice little mix of music from pop-punk, indie, hardcore, and experimental. And the

of music from pop-punk, indie, hardcore, and experimental. And the bands aren't just limited to North America: there are also European bands on here that you may not know of. When it comes to compilations, THE LIFE AND THE GAME isn't great, but it also isn't horrible. There's a nice mix of established acts represented (like Mike Park and Dynamite Boy) among the predominantly lesser-known bands that grace the comp. While this isn't a comp I would listen to regularly, I've been able to learn of some new bands to search out because of it, including Another Day Wasted and Acitone. -Dane Jackson



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE POWER OF MUSIC
UNDERGROUND OPERATIONS

While I generally like compilations, I love them when I know the proceeds go to a good cause. With THE POWER OF MUSIC, 40 of Canada's top artists band together to help fight poverty in Canada. While I wasn't really aware that Canada had this many quality bands, there are plenty of big names on this comp, including Moneen, Choke, Planet Smashers, The Weakerthans, and Bedouin Soundclash. For those of us not as familiar with the Canadian scene, this compilation also serves as a showcase. Fight poverty and learn about some great bands. What more could you ask for? -Dane Jackson



SELF-TITLED
SIDE ONE DUMMY RECORDS

This starts off like the typical electro-clash we're all familiar with: fast drum and bass and melodic keys with new wave atmospheres...that is, until the Black Flag-like vocals come in and add a very pissed-off flavor. The nice clash creates a very ideal electro-clash. However, this is just a six-song collection where there aren't many surprises or surprising moments. Like all movements, the electro-clashers might need to stop while their on top—before everyone

and their mama are doing it. www.sideonedummy.com. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



WE ARE LIONS EIGHT ARMS MADE THIS AT ONE RECORDS

We Are Lions is the product of the emo pop-punk that exploded last summer. Unfortunately, I think they're a little too late to make a difference, because they just sound stale and generic. The dual vocals don't add to the music at all, instead making them muddled and confusing to hear. Also, the band have the arrangements all they are the kind of music thou're trying to write, the tempos are

wrong. For the kind of music they're trying to write, the tempos are way too slow. If the musical arrangements were tightened up throughout and the songs with dual vocals were worked on a bit, this could be an enjoyable CD; instead, it's just more of the same—but not quite as good. -Dane Jackson



WETNURSE

SELF-RELEASED

Opening a dastardly metal album with sleigh bells is either an inside joke or a warped mind at work. Chances are that on Wet Nurse's frenetic eight-track selection that its both. This metallic juggernaut's acerbic agility and vitriolic versatility shines through on such tracks as "N.Y.C." and "Rhetorical Question", borrowing from everything from Candiria to Bloodlet to Will Haven to Poison the Well to Fantomas while remaining unique. A high-pitched vocal howl over twisting, chuming guitars and a robust rhythm section poised to change signatures on a dime is what you'll enjoy again and again from this eclectic troupe that merges sludge, stoner, noise, ambient, and disjointed slabs of intriguing metal in one cohesive package that needs to be heard repeatedly for maximum impact. www.wetnurse.net -Mike SOS



PICK YOUR PARTNERS THE PERPETUAL MOTION MACHINE

City of Caterpillar has had a large amount of influence over the noise-rock and post-punk bands of my generation. Wow Owlst have this influence, as well, but the trick is that they don't let it show. With the kind of energy that reminds me of five ADHD children drinking Red Bulls in a sea full of candy, PICK YOUR PARTNERS

mewithoutyou and Grade will find the entertainment value of this record to be stellar, with its ridiculously thick guitars and sporadic drumming, www.myspace.com/wowowls











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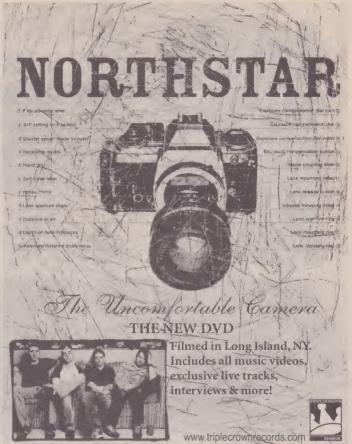
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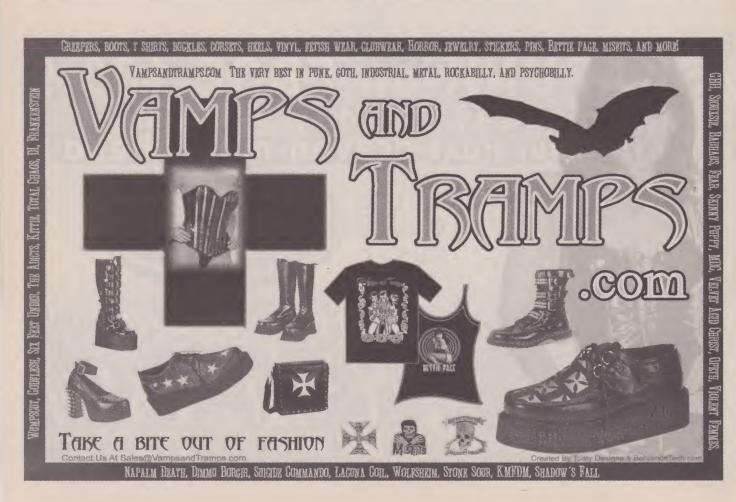
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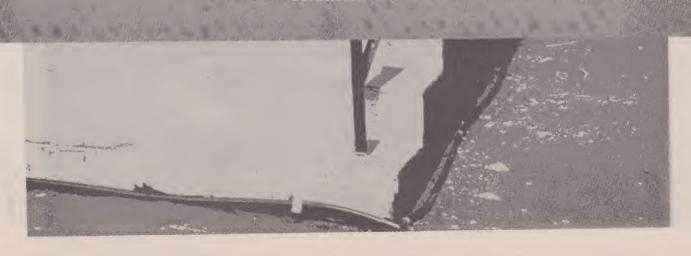






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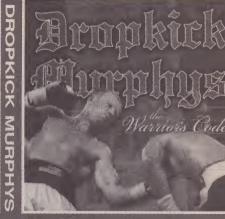
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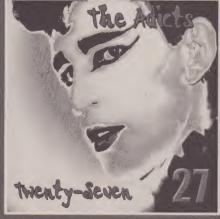


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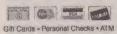


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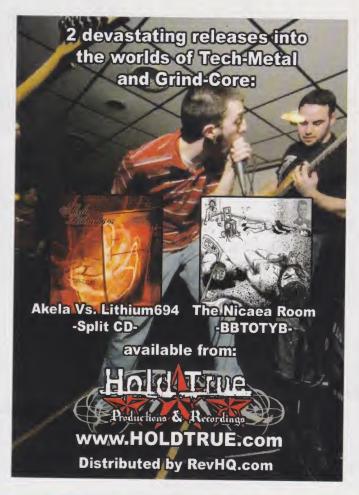




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